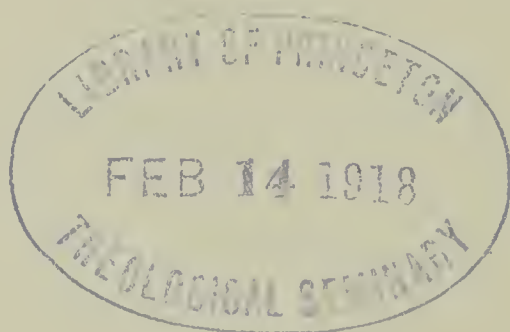


THE SUPERNATURAL
REVEALED BY NATURE

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The Supernatural Revealed by Nature

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✓✓ Libr. of relig. thought.



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INTRODUCTION

Nature is sometimes spoken of as matter behaving itself under conditions of time and space in conformity with laws of motion, attraction and repulsion, light, electricity, and so forth. In this case everything above the material would be supernatural.

We may add to this lower form of nature the forces and laws of vegetation and call the result nature, and all forms of existence above this we should call supernatural.

We may add to our second conception of nature the perception, powers and internal desires of animal life and think of the result as a third form of our concept of nature, and all forms of existence above this would be supernatural with reference to it.

We may add to this third form the mental powers peculiar to man and call the result our true conception of nature. This would be a fourth form of nature and whatever is above this, if anything, would be supernatural with reference to our fourth form.

Whether there exists anything above our fourth form or not there is a conception of such an addition in the minds of men, and there has been in all nations and among all peoples. This is the supernatural supposed in the following pages and the question is whether we have reason to believe such a form of the supernatural actually exists and mani-

fest itself or not, as we believe in the several additions to lower forms which manifest themselves successively to the human understanding.

We become conscious of the existence of an external world by the manifestations of matter acting upon matter in particular ways. It is not matter added to matter. It is matter affecting matter in a manner that produces consciousness in us. We become conscious of vegetable life through growth, development and decay. We cannot see or hear vegetable life. We do not watch the life of a rose and lift our hands in token of regret when the flower fades away and decays. The life does not leave the material twig as we cut it from its stalk, for we may set it in the ground and make it grow, and we do not think we have imparted life again. But at some definite time life leaves the plant, when we cannot tell. We only know approximately by the manifestations of matter. And because of the manifestations seen in the lower nature we do not doubt there is a higher nature in plant life.

The same reason applies to a nature higher than plant life, and we infer animal life, and again, it applies to man. From the manifestations in our four stages of nature, as set forth, including man, we must infer, and the human mind has always inferred, a supernatural with reference to the fourth form of nature as it grades the supernatural in the lower forms. It is the purpose of this work to set forth some of the reasons drawn from this comparison for a belief in a supernatural higher than our fourth form.

The first chapter, published in a magazine now

discontinued, treats of causes in general and seeks to prove the validity of purpose as a final cause which appeals to reason with a force as valid as mere material cause, and that this conception of our fourth form of nature leads us directly to the conception of a supernatural with reference to itself as the activities of matter in a growing plant lead to the belief in plant life. The chapters following treat of specific forms of the manifestations of the supernatural higher than our fourth form of nature, and seek to show that here the higher is as manifest in the lower as plant life is manifest in matter.

The chapter on Atonement and Forgiveness was published in the Bible Student and Teacher some time ago, and that on the Resurrection of Jesus has recently been published in the Bibliotheca Sacra, and in accordance with an original design they are published here with the cordial consent of the editors of those magazines.

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The Supernatural Revealed by Nature

CHAPTER I

CAUSES AND FINAL CAUSES

A SCHOOL-BOY found the word GOD boldly printed in his first reading-lesson. He had whiled away many happy hours at home with his alphabetic blocks, and had become familiar with the letters used to spell the names of his playmates and playthings; and when his teacher pointed to this group of well-remembered characters, he immediately pronounced it DOG. Such is too often the way we children of philosophy read the great lessons of creation and providence. Read direct, as the Great Instructor writes them out for us, they reveal the infinite purposes of love and care of an Infinite Creator; read backward, only a blind obedience to a blind fate.

In reading nature backward, we may learn valuable lessons of a certain kind. Sometimes nature is more easily read thus, and through inference we more clearly learn the path of duty. Having traced back sickness to over-indulgence or over-exertion, we are led to fix some practical limits to exertion and indul-

gence beyond which it is not safe for us to go. The positive command of parents might teach the same lesson in another way. By the one process we trace nature back from effect to cause, by the other we read the law of duty directly. Thus we are taught continually to look backward and forward for future direction.

Two model teachers in these two lines of instruction are Experience and Conscience. But these are not our only teachers. Of every fact against which we stumble, and event with which we are involved, we ask two questions: "What is its cause?" "What is its purpose?" However we explain the origin of these questions, they are equally natural, and press with equal insistency for an answer. We are not always equally satisfied with the answers given. In some cases, we think we understand the cause more clearly, in other cases the purpose; but we trust equally in either, according as the one or the other is the more clear. The mechanic examines a theodolite. He can soon learn that turning the screws will change the position of the different parts of the instrument, but he would never guess its use. The philosopher examines the eye of an eagle. However skilled he may be in the knowledge of material forces, he can never explain how such an organ was made, but the purpose he quickly perceives. It was made to look upon the sun, and the sun was made as it is to give light to just such organs.

But in whichever direction the understanding seeks satisfaction, it must stop with limited results. Somewhere in the chain of cause and effect we must stop;

somewhere we must stop in tracing the never-ceasing current of results. In one case we can trace back a result to a cause so general that we despair of being able to explain by human reason the cause of so great a cause, and we rest there comparatively satisfied. For example: If we find the principle of gravitation sufficient to account for any change of position in a body, we consider that we have explained the change. In another case we can trace some result of such beneficent value, and so clearly worthy the intelligence displayed in planning the means employed, that we think our conclusions in this case are practically reliable and satisfactory, if not ultimate and completely comprehensive.

It is the purpose of this essay to set forth some of the reasons why we should trust to the validity of the notion of design with as much confidence, in seeking for a solution of the problem of existence, as to the notion of physical causation. It is not my purpose to seek the limits of the argument from design, nor to consider its force in any intricate or doubtful cases. How far it may be used as evidence of the attributes of any controlling Intelligence in nature, or what purposes may have been in view in creation, are questions with which I do not intend here to deal. I only maintain that the notion of design, and of intelligence inferred from marks of design, are as valid as the notion of natural causation and the deductions of physical science.

I. The teleological argument antedates the Christian era, and has been more elaborately developed, perhaps, than any other argument ever stated in log-

ical form; and it would be just to demand my reasons for this new discussion of it. I reply, therefore, that an aggressive and influential section of scientific men deny its validity. According to these men, no explanation of any phenomenon is worth a moment's thought except that of material causality. La Place constructed a "System of the Universe," which he declared did not need a Deity. Mr. Darwin says: "If the doctrine . . . that very many structures have been created for beauty in the eyes of man" is true, "it would be fatal to my theory."¹ In professing to believe his theory, he denies his ability to believe we can legitimately trace any idea of purpose in any structure or form of animal life, to anything outside of that in which it exists or was developed. The German advocates of evolution deny teleology, and originally criticised the "Origin of Species" because they thought it taught design. But Prof. Huxley hastens to charge the German critics with misunderstanding their English neighbor, and expresses his own belief that "teleology, as commonly understood, has received its death-blow at Mr. Darwin's hands."

It is not necessary to quote further to show the hostility of these "scientists" to the argument from design, and how fatal they consider its acceptance would be to their notions of science. They do not dogmatically deny the existence of a Designer outside of what we call nature, but they do affirm that we cannot know anything of him from creation. Says Prof. Huxley: "Till we know all the conse-

¹Origin of Species, p. 178. (Am. ed.)

quences to which all possible combinations continued through infinite time can give rise, any hypothesis is better than the miserable presumption . . . that any phenomenon is out of the reach of natural causation."² But no one understands better than he that we can never hope to know all this; and his language is a plain denial of the validity of all argument except that of cause and effect.

Let us now for a moment imagine ourselves shut up absolutely to such a belief as this, and look around upon our situation. In the first place, there is no evidence of the future continuance of existing physical conditions. We have now, remember, given up expecting any purpose to be fulfilled; there is no longer anything to be aimed at, and no monstrosity of physical change or development ought at any time to surprise us. This the old Epicureans consistently admitted. We know not, nor is there anything that can teach us, even to a degree of probability, what new combination of causes the morrow is likely to reveal; and who knows how soon we may revert to lower animal life, or develop into fiends? Then, we feel an utter lack of sympathy between ourselves and everything around us. At best we are in no better condition than pebbles on the sea-shore, grating harshly against each other, or ground to powder between larger stones.

Again, there is no basis for morality. If we would seek a basis in the principle of the greatest good to the greatest number, we are met by the fact that

²Lay Sermons, p. 282.

now all good is contingent upon blind physics, and as future physical conditions are uncertain, nothing can assure us that what is good to-day will be good to-morrow, or the day following, or at least, all so-called good and evil may be reversed in some future time, not many ages distant. If we rely on conscience, it no longer says, "An omniscient Creator planted me in the soul," but it refers us only to the history of the past, and finds no sanctions of future retribution or delight. If we ask to know a single step beyond this life, we are told it is a leap into utter darkness. We do not know whether we shall be conscious or unconscious; or, if we could be assured of consciousness, whether we shall be virtuous or wicked, with a new combination of circumstances—whether we shall have happiness or misery. Mr. Darwin says there need be no fear but the race will continue to grow in intelligence, and improve in what he calls morals. But how does he guess at that? What fixes for him the acme of perfection to which purposeless forces will elevate the race? What is meant by improvement or perfection, when every stone fits snugly in its bed of mortar, and cannot do otherwise? Reasoning on the future is all out of place. We can only know the past, and that to no purpose. Purpose does not rule.

Objection may be made to this discussion that the extreme denials spoken of are confined to a small number of men, and have only a theoretical influence with them. It may be said that materialists do not agree among themselves, and that there is no fear but true reason will finally prevail, and false

theories, if left to themselves, will perish from their own want of consistency. But it is only apparent that theoretical opposition to a belief in the supernatural is gaining a wide-spread practical influence over the popular mind. We may see this in the tone of the public press, and in the guarded forms of expression which men feel themselves everywhere compelled to make, if they would avoid being called superstitious. The claims of Christianity to the divine sanctions of prophetic vision, miraculous power, and providential control, which were once the undeniable defence of the truth, have become the most difficult obstacles to its acceptance, in the minds of many just beginning to reason on the profound principles of existence.

Again, we cannot rely on the effectiveness of old arguments to meet new forms of error. Skepticism is continually changing its front. No pains are taken by evolutionists to deny the statement that marks of design in nature would argue an intelligent cause. It is denied that there are marks of design. "Far from imagining that cats exist *in order* to catch mice well," says Prof. Huxley, "Darwinianism supposes that cats exist *because* they catch mice well."³ A cat not only would not have been a cat, it would not have been anything, it would have gone under in the struggle for existence, if it had not caught mice well.

II. As materialists take the defensive in this argument, and content themselves with simple denials, it

³Lay Sermons, p. 303.

is impossible to tell what or how much they will admit. It is necessary, therefore, to go back to first principles, and inquire whether the human mind is justified in inferring design at all or not—whether or not we can find any valid testimony in nature, except that which merely affirms physical force. This is a simple question, and requires no elaborate argument. It is primitive, and the chain of evidence has but one link. Does this make real connections that we may trust it to anchor us to the unknown, or is it an illusion?

I suppose that no one would think me so foolish as to write this article with no design, no purpose; or, rather, I suppose that I could not write it unless I had some purpose as a motive for writing, as well as some ability to express my thoughts. In writing this paragraph I am as conscious that an end in view is necessary to secure my attempting to write, as that an ability to use words that will express my thoughts is essential to the act itself. There may be a prospect of making money, of gaining a reputation, or of influencing men to think as I desire to have them think. Whatever it is that influences me to write I call a purpose. As this purpose is that which causes me to write, it is also a cause.

I perceive then two kinds of causes. The purpose or reason I have for writing is the cause of the attempt to write and so the cause of the writing, and the writing is the instrument or cause by means of which the end is secured. I am conscious of the influence of the end in view before it has anything more than an ideal existence, and it may in fact never

be more than ideal. As a power with me it is independent of the effort I put forth; for in its influence it antedates the effort. But my effort, or my writing, is not independent of this motive, and cannot be; therefore, while the writing will be the efficient cause of the accomplishment of my purpose, if I gain my object, the purpose is in a deeper sense the cause of its efficient cause. Aristotle recognizes this principle, and says that "the thing for which" is the highest of all causes. I am, indeed, more certain of the causal power of this purpose in my mind than I should be of a causal connection between the writing and any one of the results spoken of above, if it should follow. A poor blind man brings me some verses. I look upon his tattered garments and sad countenance, and, as I take his worthless rhymes, I give him some money. He may flatter himself that his hobbling measures secured my money, but he is deceived. It is his sad condition. So I may not be sure of causation from sequence; but I am sure that ambition, pride, and the love of mankind are real powers with me.

I am now led to inquire if this final cause differs in its action from physical causes in such a way that I cannot explain one class by the other. I see a ball move in space and strike against a similar ball that is motionless. The first ball stops at the point of contact, and the second moves. We say that the motion of the first ball was the cause of the motion of the second. I observe here three relations between the cause and its effect. First, the cause existed before the effect; secondly, the cause ceased as the ef-

fect was produced; and thirdly, the cause and the effect were exactly equal. If now I see several balls on a table, and a person strikes one which strikes a second, and then a third, and that by this means a game is won and profit secured, what do I say is the cause of the player's action? The ability to play and the desire of profit were only permanent states of his being, and could not have produced action. Past experience can only give the mind susceptibility. That which excited the player to act, was the profit conceived of as contingent on his act. The potential future is that which excites the mind to determination. I know that my acts would be very different in their nature, they would not be voluntary, if I were not influenced by some future potential and contingent object. I am conscious of the force of final causes with me, and I know that they alone give character to my conduct. I must say, then, that the profit was the final cause of the game I have spoken of. But I find here first, that the final cause did not exist in reality until after the effect; secondly, it was brought into being through its effect; and, thirdly, I cannot compare the force of the cause and its effect. I see that the same player will play the same game for different amounts of profit, and I notice that often the more one plays the less is required to induce him to play. It is thus that ambition, covetousness, love of humanity, piety, grow in power with us as they increase in effect. If it be asked how that which does not exist, and which indeed may never exist—for the reckless youth may lose his game—can be the cause of that which is, the

only reply we can make is that the mind is so constituted as to be thus moved. But as puzzling a question arises with physical causation. The cause and its effect do not exist at the same time.

This does not lead me to suppose that a potential good which does not exist in reality, creates a physical force by means of which it brings itself into existence. My mind itself, so far as I can judge, cannot add a single grain to the physical forces of the universe. But a final cause induces my mind to put forth a volition which determines the manner in which existing physical forces shall act. The direction of forces is changed, and it is in this change by which forces are adapted to each other that we find the evidences of design. Forces act in a manner I cannot understand except by supposing they are controlled by an intelligent purpose. I do not know how others explain my acts, but I myself can trace them back through various links of causation to my voluntary mind where I see the forces are no more able to produce action until a purpose comes into view, than a lump of anthracite is able to move a railway train before a fire is kindled. I am not now seeking to explain the origin of physical force. I am seeking to account for the mode of its action. In myself I can trace this to the influence of final causes. Why not in others and in nature?

I find, then, the three essential and important differences I have named in the action of the two classes of causes. Since the physical cause must exist entirely before its effect, whatever phenomenon cannot be accounted for by facts which have preceded it,

cannot be accounted for at all on the principle of physical causation. But since the final cause can only exist as an accomplished fact after it has exerted its influence, intelligent action can only be explained as intelligent by that which follows it. Since the physical cause ceases as its effect is produced there is no ground for a choice of results, if choice were antecedently possible, and so no possibility of a sense of responsibility, and there could be no sanctions for responsibility, the cause not existing now, could mere matter be responsible. But the intelligent mind, being conscious of its power to choose before it acts whether its purpose shall exist or not, and anticipating the enjoyment of its purpose, holds itself responsible for its choice, and as it expects a co-existence with its purpose as an accomplished fact, it expects to be held responsible by others. And since the physical cause and effect are equal there is a basis for exact calculation in physical science; but a final cause is without measure. Back of these simple principles we cannot go. It is possible to suppose a higher principle of causation into which both classes of causes may be resolved, but one cannot be explained by the other. If there is a common basis it lies back of both, and is apparently beyond the reach of our reason. We can only say matter is mobile, existing force can move it; the mind is voluntary, the force of potential good or evil can cause volition.

It is not necessary for us to say anything about the essence or nature of causality; the phenomena are all that concern this argument, and whether it is

necessary to conceive of a force as passing from cause to effect or not, the existence of causal phenomena remain the same

Now I ask myself if I can impart to the products of my toil any character by which others ought to read my design. It seems to me not only possible but absolutely necessary if there are any beings like myself that they should say at least that I must have some purpose. And not only so, but I cannot, even if I try, wholly prevent others from knowing something of what my design is. The most adroit criminal can scarcely cover up all his tracks so perfectly that the detective can discover nothing of his intentions.

I must for myself, then, believe in the existence of final causes which act in consequence of their relation to my mind; I must believe that these differ in their action from physical causes; and I must believe that every result of my rational activity constitutes a mark of design to which I at least can give but one interpretation.

III. But still I am left to wonder if anything in nature, besides myself, is influenced by purposes. All intelligent acts must have design, but do any acts, besides my own, reveal intelligence? I am led, then, in the next place to ask myself if I can legitimately infer design from things with the origin of which I have had nothing to do.

As I turn from thoughts of myself, I observe an object on my table. I take it and look at it. On one edge I read,

THE DESCENT OF MAN.

DARWIN.

I.

I turn it over; it opens, I find it is a book, and it expresses thoughts that I am able more or less clearly to understand. They appeal to my reason, sentiment, and humanity, just as I would seek to appeal to others if I were writing a book. I should strive to reveal my own thoughts. I wonder if this book does not give the ideas of some man concerning his origin, and if the author's name is not Darwin, and if he does not purpose to write a second volume. And I wonder if he has not some other purpose in view than simply to write. I see great pains have been taken in making it attractive, and in bringing it within the reach of intelligent men, and this confirms my last supposition. I do not know what the motives of this Darwin were, but the evidence to me is strong that he had some purpose beyond that of simply writing. Perhaps he had a variety of purposes. These suppositions seem very natural to me, judging from the constitution of my own mind.

Now I stop and wonder if I have any right to reason from the action of rational causes on my mind to the action of causes on anything else. I cannot conceive of a rational act without a purpose; but what if there are no rational acts besides my own. I confess I have no evidence of the existence of intelli-

gence in any Darwin, or anything else outside of my own consciousness, save the evidence of phenomena. I wonder if I should be justified in supposing the author of this book was influenced by any motive or purpose, as I am. I can conceive that a great deal of machine work may have been employed in preparing the paper, forming the letters, binding and otherwise. But it seems to me that behind all this there must have been some intelligence. After the most candid reflection I am convinced that some of my suppositions at least are reasonable. The evidence is so strong that I do not believe I can be mistaken when I affirm that the book had an intelligent author.

This satisfies me that it is just for me to infer design in other works than my own. As I look around I see abundant evidence everywhere that men never doubt their ability to know what motives will persuade others to do or undertake certain things. All trade is possible only on this supposition. The banker will loan money on promises to pay, the traveller's goal is before him, the workman does not expect his pay till his work is done, yet without hope of a reward not one of these would put forth an effort.

So evident is this principle that I fear I may be blamed for having made it so important. But this is the principle evolutionists have confused. I have already referred to Mr. Darwin's supposed ambiguity in the "Origin of Species." He says in palliation: "I was not able to annul the influence of my former belief, then widely prevalent, that each

species had been purposely created."⁴ Now, he implies, and in various ways affirms, it is all "annulled." But he is none the less "ambiguous" in his "Descent of Man." Language and nature alike protest. On almost every page we find such expressions as "purpose," "design," "in order to," "in order that," not teaching "teleology as commonly understood," but in an obscure and misleading sense. It seemed necessary, then, to give as careful an analysis of causation as possible and establish the distinction between final and physical causes on a firm basis.

IV. We have seen now that we are conscious of being influenced ourselves by final causes, and that these differ essentially from physical causes, and that we infer the action of the same class of causes from some of the phenomena around us. Next let us compare the validity of the notion of design with the validity of the notion of cause and effect, as primitive notions.

In the first place the one cannot be said to rest on a sounder basis in the constitution of the human mind than the other. Perhaps we cannot be entirely certain of the origin of either, but in all probability it is the same for both. If the one originates in observing the effect of the conscious exercise of the will, the other originates in the consciousness of the effect of motives on the will. If the one is an innate capacity to infer cause from observing sequence, the other is an innate capacity to infer design from fitting coincidence, or some other relation. That the idea cor-

⁴The Descent of Man, Vol. I, p. 147.

responds to the reality is just as certain in one case as in the other on either supposition. On the hypothesis of innate capacity we cannot see the nexus in either case, and can only say we are constituted to believe in these truths. On the hypothesis of conscious volition, we must affirm that if we are conscious of the exercise of any one power more clearly than another, that power is the force of motive. On either hypothesis, therefore, the notions must be considered as equally legitimate.

In the second place there is no more suspicion cast upon the validity of one of these notions as primary truths than the other by experience. It may be doubted, indeed, if it is possible to shake the confidence of any man in the least degree in either. We cannot understand all the applications of truth nor define it with absolute exactness, but the truth itself we believe to be universal. We are often unable to explain the action of the best known causes when they involve the infinite, the infinitesimal, or some other element imperfectly understood. We must even be on our guard in the application of mathematical principles, or we shall be led into absurdity. In no department of thinking can the finite mind play hide and seek with the infinitely great, or the infinitely small with impunity. The joke will sometimes come back on ourselves. But notwithstanding the absurdities into which we are sometimes led by what we think for the time being is necessary reasoning, we cannot disbelieve the primary truths of our being. We salt our logic with common sense. Achilles will catch the tortoise—there is no doubt of that.

But if you can induce me to confine my arithmetic to calculating the time it will take for him to travel the distance between them at each successive interval, I must confess I cannot justify my belief by mathematics. The end of all the times I can thus obtain, though I go on to infinity, will not find me at the point of capture. It takes some time to travel each distance given, and when this is travelled there will still be a new distance for the persevering Achilles to make. But puzzling as the question is, looked at from this point of view, no one yet ever doubted but Achilles would win in the chase. The most absurd suppositions have been made by men to explain the difficulty which seems so logical, but I never knew a man to hesitate an instant to affirm that if Achilles gained ground he would catch up in time. I have seen a mathematical professor of uncommon keenness so mixed in his judgment that he seriously asserted and tried to maintain that Achilles could catch the tortoise only by passing it a little way and waiting for his prey to come up. When finally driven from this absurdity, the professor declared that Achilles's motion would not be mathematically constant, and that he could catch the tortoise only as he gave a sort of spring when he drew very near, and landed by the tortoise's side. Absurd as these explanations are, he maintained them stoutly and seriously in the heat of discussion, but his faith did not waver an instant in the fact that in some way or other the swift-footed courser would come up with his moping quarry. So it is in all applications of the principles of causation and motive. Our understand-

ing of them is with finite minds. When we attempt to understand the infinite we may be puzzled, but we never falter in our application of these principles to things with which we are familiar. Both principles are established as valid principles of judgment beyond dispute or cavil.

In the third place, I do not see that any suspicion ought to rest on the validity of the evidence for design as evidence, arising from the fact that we cannot tell in given cases what the determining purpose may have been. We are not now seeking to know what final causes have exerted their influence; we desire to know if it is of any use to look for final causes. If we find there are final causes we will then use our reason the best we can to determine what these are, as in the case of other truth.

But the teleologist is no worse off even in this respect than the "scientist." Physical causes are numerous and uncertain. So great is the liability to mistake in the analysis of physical causation, that it is confessed there is not a single principle of physical science that is established beyond question. Every principle holds itself open to criticism or refutation. Some that have the most general application fail unaccountably under certain circumstances, and if made to conform exactly to nature, so as to explain all the phenomena to which they should apply, might need to be stated in an entirely different way. It is wonderful what evidence Sir Isaac Newton could adduce to prove the truth of his theory of light. He could explain almost every known phenomenon. But now the prevalent theory of light

is wholly unlike his. The law of resultant motion in mechanics cannot be applied to forces and motions of a minute character. A ripple made on the surface of a pond goes on in its own direction to the shore and there is no interference from other ripples crossing it, as we might expect judging from the law of resultant motion. The light of all the stars comes to the eye direct, and the different rays are not defeated in their mission by other rays which are continually met, going on errands in different directions. The general principle does not cover the whole case, and we can only keep ourselves from practical error by the counter statement that in very minute movements of very small particles of matter two impulses of motion will not unite or affect each other unless in the same or the opposite direction. But no provision is made in the general statement for this limitation, and as there is provision in nature for the fact, we know not how great a change an exact statement might require. The most universal of physical laws, the law of gravitation, presents a still worse case. It not only fails when we reduce the distance between particles of matter within certain limits, but the reverse is said to be true. The law itself makes no provision for this change from attraction to repulsion, but nature does; who knows, therefore, that Newton's law may not at some time be laid away with the theories of the alchemist. The fact illustrated by these cases, that our knowledge is limited, is universal. But it is practically reliable in this life, and we cannot doubt but that as far as it is applicable it will practically stand the judgment

of the world to come.

Having found the validity of teleology subject to no more doubts on theoretical grounds than physical science, either in respect to its basis in the reason or in respect to its application to nature, I do not see where Prof. Huxley has discovered such an overwhelming presumption against teleological arguments in respect to creation, that he can say any hypothesis is better than to accept such testimony, even to the extent of affirming that anything in nature has a purpose. I do not, indeed, see where the least antecedent presumption can be found against this kind of argument in respect to any phenomena that come within the reach of our intelligence. As Agassiz has well said, "The most advanced Darwinians seem reluctant to acknowledge the intervention of any intellectual power in the diversity which obtains in nature, under the plea that such admission implies creative acts for every species. What of it, if it were true?" Do they shrink from results?

CHAPTER II

THE POSSIBILITY OF THE SUPERNATURAL BIRTH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS NOT NOW TO BE DISPUTED

FOLLOWING in the wake of the higher criticism it cannot be doubted that there is a strenuous and persistent effort on the part of many serious persons to reconcile their Christian consciousness with a rejection of the belief in the supernatural, and especially the supernatural birth and resurrection of Christ. They recognize in experience the power and reality of the Christian life, but doubt or hesitate to accept the account of its efficient cause. They have no trouble in justifying their estimate of the reliability and value of their experience from their belief in the purity and nobility of Christian doctrine, the power of Christianity as a civilizing agency in the world, and above all the model life of the Founder of Christianity. They believe the world could not afford to lose the influence of Christ's life and teaching, and for themselves would, perhaps, rather lose life itself than drop out of it their Christian experience; for life is short at best, and long or short, is scarcely worth living without the hope and comfort that come through this experience. But in the light of modern criticism they stumble at the idea of the supernatural, and hold it an open question whether we could not continue

to maintain the reality of Christian consciousness in the world, and yet give up the belief in the supernatural birth and the resurrection of Christ. They are casting about to see how the world may continue to enjoy the fruits of a Christian life if the tree itself were cut down at the root.

A striking example of the reasoning suggested by such doubts has been quoted by the public press from a widely read and influential religious journal as follows: "The divinity of Jesus Christ does not depend on physiological theories of his birth. It is attested by his life and work and teaching." "If it could be scientifically proved that Jesus Christ was not supernaturally born and not supernaturally raised from the dead, that would afford no reason for rejecting Christianity." This is not a denial of the supernatural birth and resurrection, but it puts one on his guard against accepting the doctrine, and whatever the prevailing belief of the writer quoted it is a short step for the reader to change "if" to "we grant," and for another to say, "Since it is generally accepted." Thus the only two events since the creation of the world which have universal significance and value would lose all their value because that which is required to give them significance has been scientifically proved to be false.

But some one will say that the cross remains. Belief in that has not been disturbed. It requires nothing supernatural to explain the death of Christ. Not only is death the common lot of humanity, but it is the common law for the good to sacrifice themselves for the bad. The poet reads it in the con-

stantly recurring deaths of the noble and the great like Socrates, Savonarola and Lincoln, and in the pangs of the pious over their wayward children and sings:

“Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne;
But that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow keeping watch above his own.”

But what is there left on the cross if the supernatural be taken away? Nothing but one more illustrative example of the common law of sacrifice, which has been illustrated again and again in all ages of the world's history. If there was nothing supernatural in the person on the cross what assurance was assumed in the words to the dying thief. Were they not profounder mockery than any used by priest, by soldier, or by jeering crowd against the crucified himself?

When we are told “The divinity of Jesus Christ does not depend on physiological theories of his birth,” it might be easily answered, “Neither did the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ depend on any physiological theories of the laws of birth and death.” But the suspicion suggested here that there may be some scientific proof that Jesus was not of supernatural birth, or that he did not rise from the dead, is absolutely without warrant. The “if” in the case is gratuitously superfluous assumption. Rea-

sons may be brought forward to raise grave doubts and serious questions, and the reasons against believing in these supernatural events as facts may seem to some stronger than those in favor of believning, but of scientific proof there is not a particle. Proof, whether scientific or otherwise, must recognize the laws of logic. In the case supposed science must undertake to prove a negative in each of two cases, which the laws of logic do no allow to be done in any way now proposed or apparently possible. We may prove a contradictory and so establish a negative with logical certainty. But even then, when dealing with the infinite, as in the case of eternity in time or infinity of space, the reason may be left in mid air between two contradictories. Thus we cannot think of absolute time and space either as limited or as unlimited. But testimony to a negative is not proof. A hundred men in a crowd may testify that they did not see a certain theft committed, but it would weigh nothing against the reliable testimony of one man who did see it. If on the other hand the hundred men should testify that they did see the theft committed by a certain man and it could be positively proved that the person charged with theft was in a place a mile away when the crime was committed, the charge must fail, or the negative would be satisfactorily proved. The proof of the alibi is satisfactory proof of the contradictory. A man cannot be in London and at the same time commit a theft in New York. But the mere failure to see a thing that has happened does not prove that it did not happen. A

very impressive lesson has been taught us on this kind of evidence by the application of a rule in the practice of the United States court which requires proof by the illogical method. There is a rule that if in the trial of a case the court makes an improper ruling against a person charged with crime and he is convicted, a higher court must grant a new trial on application unless it is positively proved that the ruling did not in any way affect the defendant injuriously. In other words the state is required to prove a negative. So difficult is it for a court to avoid all errors in rulings, and so difficult to sustain a negative proposition even beyond a reasonable doubt that no important case is lost without appeal, and few cases without a new trial. This has led to such protracted and expensive litigation, and such a miscarriage of justice that President Roosevelt in an annual message to Congress advised that a law be enacted requiring the person claiming to have been aggrieved in such a case to show affirmatively that he had been wronged, if he would make an erroneous ruling the basis of a claim for a new trial. This seems to place the burden of proof on the defendant, but in fact it only allows the defendant against one charge to become a prosecutor on another charge, and he must present affirmative proof to sustain his charge. It is no more than just to require him to bear the burden of presenting this proof.

The principle involved in the rule of the court has its direct bearing on the case we are considering. The "if" assumes that two negatives, namely, that Jesus was not of supernatural birth, and that he was

not raised from the dead, may be scientifically proved. This assumption both logic and science refuse to allow. Logic will not allow it because they are negative propositions, the logical proof of which is not now attainable, if it ever existed; and science does not ask for it, for of all forms of human inquiry science is opposed to placing value on negative results. How long has science sought for the missing link? How many failures to find it will be required to prove that it does not exist? For science to say that Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead would be unscientific in the extreme. It might deny the validity of the proof offered in favor of the belief, but it is no part of its mission to deny the event as a possible fact.

But it may be asked what difference it makes whether reasons are offered for belief in a negative proposition or reasons that would prove the contradictory affirmative; why it is not as legitimate to argue directly for the denial of the supernatural birth and resurrection as to argue for facts that would be inconsistent with such claim. In this case it makes all the difference in the world. The first claim is that Jesus Christ was not of supernatural birth. Put in the form of its contradictory affirmative it must be claimed that he had a human father. This is the only form of a contradictory which we can imagine in the case. But the bare statement of it in this form puts it beyond the reach of present controversy. It is beyond the reach of present scientific proof as a question of fact. It is a question of balancing evidences of probability. We may

justly claim that the burden of proof belongs to those who believe in the supernatural birth, and if one chooses he may demand for himself higher proofs than any yet given, but the believer cannot be justly charged with being illogical or unscientific.

The case of the resurrection may be argued in precisely the same way as that of the supernatural birth. The only logical proof against the fact of the resurrection must show what became of the body of Christ. The case is made stronger for the believer than that of the supernatural birth, because those who originally denied the resurrection had the opportunity, the facilities and the motive to prove its contradictory if their contentions had been just; and they do not seem ever to have attempted to do this except by bribing false witnesses to say at the risk of their lives that while they slept on guard the body was stolen away. Within fifty days the evidences of the resurrection were proclaimed in the most public manner, but the Jewish enemies of Christ, who were determined to stamp out the new doctrine, do not seem to have ever brought the charge against the apostles even in their most unscrupulous attacks. Why did they not bring the charge before Pilate or some Roman court where the evidence could be presented and the new error thus crushed at a single blow? Apparently they neither made such a claim formally before the court nor informally in their most lawless proceedings, and the case, so far as positive proof is concerned, is beyond review. The only logical conclusion is for us to say that the case of the supernatural birth and

resurrection of Jesus Christ as facts is absolutely closed against all available positive evidence in proof of their scientific impossibility.

But while science has nothing to say in support of a denial of the possibility of such facts it may have many things to say as to their manifestation in particular cases, and may prove so strong a corrective of superstition as to be an important ally of the truth. But the testimony of science is not all on the side of doubt. The revelation which science makes of the unity of plan and purpose in creation points clearly to a supreme organizer, and when nature reveals imperfections here or there she may use science to foster the belief that the plan is larger than we have thought, and that help may come from a higher power that made us a part of a greater whole. The earth may still foster a larger science than has yet been discovered.

CHAPTER III

EVIDENCE OF THE SUPERNATURAL NOT INCREDIBLE

THE consideration of the impossibility of now disproving the supernatural birth and resurrection of Christ as facts leads us out naturally to the broader question of the incredibility of any supernatural event. In the face of such arguments as those presented it can hardly be claimed that science can prove the events discussed to be impossible, and against the evidences involved in the rise and existence of the church, history is not likely to declare them false as facts. The most that can be done is to throw doubt upon them. Yet with the same bold assumption as was manifest in presuming that science might prove them impossible it is insistently maintained that as supernatural events they are incredible. This form of argument may be considered as practically beginning with the philosopher Hume. It has been adapted to modern polemics by a class of scientists who would accept nothing as fact which does not appeal to the senses.

The argument is two-fold: psychological, based on our consciousness of intellectual experience, and materialistic, based on our experience of physical nature. The psychological argument is that of Hume, and the materialistic has grown up with modern science. Let us first consider the psychological argu-

ment. As put by Hume it is substantially as follows: "All beliefs grow out of experience. My experience of human testimony is that it is unreliable, hence the state of my mind as to any man's word must be one of doubt. I always look for corroborative evidence to support it. The word itself is not sufficient. But my experience of nature is that it is uniform. I do not ask other evidence to support any particular act that shows this uniformity. Therefore no amount of human testimony can establish in me a belief in an event which has not the uniformity of nature or which is opposed to it; that is, in the supernatural." This seems to be a fair logical argument. It does not deny the possibility of the supernatural, which as a negative, might be incapable of proof, but it denies the possibility of the author's being made to believe in the supernatural on any human testimony. This is also a negative, but it is a fair conclusion, for its contradictory, that is, that the value of a man's particular experience of testimony, which is always less than certainty, is greater than the value of his experience of the uniformity of nature, which has never had an exception to take from its certainty, is absurd. It is like making a part greater than the whole. This argues not only the unreasonableness of belief in the supernatural on psychological grounds, but it argues the impossibility of the author's being made to believe in the supernatural by any human testimony.

But not only Hume's beliefs, but my beliefs depend upon experience, as do all our ideas. This must be psychologically true, and must be accepted

to make the argument valid. Then the argument should be good for me as well as for Hume, and for all others who have not seen miracles as for me. It goes to the extent of denying, on psychical grounds, the possibility of any one's being made to believe in miracles on human testimony. In fact Hume seems to have had this idea in mind for he says, "Whoever is moved by faith to assent to the Christian religion is conscious of a continued miracle in his own person, which subverts all the principles of his understanding." This can only mean that a professed belief in the supernatural is not real belief; for if he says it must be a miracle and he does not believe in miracles, then he means to deny the reality of such a belief. He would doubtless say that the so-called belief is superficial, and that a doubt really stronger than the belief lurks underneath, which it is only necessary to bring into consciousness to remove all pretense of belief in the miraculous. He elsewhere distinctly says he believes he is about to establish a conclusive argument that will eradicate belief in the miraculous from the thoughts of men. We must be sure that those who tell of seeing the miraculous are mistaken in themselves, or trying to deceive us. Indeed one who had seen what is called a miracle could never honestly call it supernatural, for it would be more natural, or rather it would be the only natural thing, for him to say that while he could not then explain it he might explain it in the future when he had more knowledge, a situation of which he has had much experience.

But it is a firmly established fact that all our

ideas depend upon experience, no less than our beliefs; and we are forced to take a more advanced position still and say it would be impossible for the idea of the supernatural ever to occur to a human being on this earth; for it is natural that a finite creature should think of the inexplicable, of which we have an abundance of experience—and experience can go no further in the case of what is called miraculous than to say it is beyond our present power to explain. The succession of cause and effect is called a chain, but the figure is misleading in this that the links are not seen to overlap and interlock. We do not know how many links there may be between any two which we see and think of as connected. A fault in the chain which is said by some to be filled by the supernatural, is filled by others by supposing natural links which we do not see, and we would always suppose such links to exist, for we have often discovered them even where little suspected. Experience tells us that the undiscovered may be discovered, but the supernatural never comes into our experience. Experience has given us a clue to the idea of the discoverable but not to the idea of the supernatural.

But the idea of the supernatural is found in the mind and that not only in the minds of the mature but in minds of all degrees of development, in the minds of children, and in all climes and all ages of the world. The argument that leads to the conclusion that such a belief, even such an idea, is impossible must be weak somewhere. Must we not conclude that we get more by experience than the argu-

ment of Hume recognizes?

The psychological argument leads to the denial of the possibility of the notion of the supernatural as coming from natural experience. Thus far it must go, and thus far it seems perfectly logical, if we accept the limitations of knowledge necessary to the argument itself. How the thought of the supernatural could ever come into the human mind is the problem for the psychological doubter to solve. It seems psychologically true that all beliefs go back to experience, not only for their validity but for the conception of the terms in which they are stated. On natural grounds the idea of the supernatural should never have entered the human mind.

Remembering this result of the metaphysical argument to which we have come, let us now drop its consideration and turn for the present to the physical argument. This is a legitimate descendent of Hume's argument and differs from it only in substituting the term law for uniformity of experience. This seems at first sight to put a different phase on the argument, for instead of the metaphysical question of the origin of beliefs, and the subjective notions of experience, we are asked to weigh the value of what is presented as the objective existence of law; and it strikes us as something more substantial, and the arguments based on it seem more indisputable. It is so outside of ourselves that there can be no prejudice for or against it. Law is the end of argument.

But the physical argument does not differ essentially from the metaphysical in its strength or its

weakness, and it appears to be more conclusive only because in its terms it falls in more with the lines of modern thought. The law itself, so far as it is only natural law, while it seems so objective, so a thing in itself, and is a handy substitute in thinking and in argument, is only a more general expression for the subjective experience of the uniformity of nature. We shall soon see that the physical argument fails at precisely the same point as the metaphysical.

The first thing to be noticed in respect to the physical argument is, that the term natural law is misleading, and as used by the strict materialist, it is self-contradictory. However the physical philosopher may define nature, the materialist always implies that it is matter, and only acts on matter, among other things on the senses. But so-called natural laws have no existence in that kind of nature which affects the senses. In nature a fact is what it is by itself alone regardless of all other facts. If any force or connection exists between any two facts, it exists regardless of any other combination of facts. Only the idea of law exists for the materialist, as for other, and that as a substitute for the idea of uniformity. Matter acts according to its own nature, it cannot do otherwise. Its actions may conform to the law of its maker if there is such a law, as a picture conforms to the idea of the artist, but it does not mean anything to say that matter obeys law. Obedience implies the power of disobedience, the power of choice, will. The power of choice or will is the very thing which the materialist denies to mat-

ter and to all things that appeal to the senses. Matter may exhibit conformity to law, but it cannot strictly be said to obey law without giving it the power of free choice. To think of law as objective, is to think of it as above nature or supernatural. Used by the strict materialist the expression is but a confession of the inadequacy of his proclaimed belief to satisfy his mind.

But let us take the word law as used by physical philosophers of a larger class. We are told by the philologist that the Latin word for law points to its origin with the king who substituted a general expression of his will for specific directions which it would be impossible for him to give when immediate communication with all his subjects was impracticable. The law indicated what the king expected of his subjects, and fixed the penalties which would follow a failure to heed the directions. Thus the law was the king's deputy, and it limited the king in the exaction of penalties and the subjects in its commands. But it was the product of a free will, and it could be changed by the will that made it. And it might be violated by the subjects. The one unchangeable thing about it was that so long as it stood the king was bound not to demand a greater penalty than the law had prescribed.

As the civil law did not originate with the subject but in the mind of the king, and as it was its purpose to represent him to his subjects, so what we call natural law exists objectively to us only in an intelligence above nature, and it is manifested through the uniformity of nature, in order to reveal to us some-

thing of the way in which it is designed that created objects should behave. It was not designed to control nature, but it gives intelligent beings for their guidance a knowledge of the way material nature is controlled. If then we get the idea of law by experience, we must conclude that, as in the case of the metaphysical argument, we get something by experience which the senses do not give. We may, then, include both psychological skepticism and materialistic unbelief as to the supernatural under one head, as failing to account for the origin of the idea and the belief of the supernatural, and as ignoring or denying a power of mind higher than sense perception, the very power that is necessary to originate such an idea or belief.

Here we ought to make a distinction which it is easy to overlook. It is not the same thing to say that an idea ought to be held as subject to the test of experience, as it is to say that the idea must come from experience. It may come with experience in such a manner as to make it subject to experimental test without coming from it. The notion a child forms of an animal when it looks at a picture book does not come from the picture, but its correctness may be tested by sight of animals of that kind. The corrected notion does not come from the animals seen for the child knows it is subject to the test of other animals which may differ from them in many ways. The notion is the representative of the class, and may be tested by comparing it with any one individual of the class, but it is not an individual of the class, nor is it a flock, or herd, or company of

individuals. The mind is stimulated by experience to form the notion, but the power to form the notion is different from that of using the senses. The same is true of numerical notions, of notions of geometrical forms which cannot be perfectly tested, of notions of right and wrong and of other classes of notions. No one has ever been able to conceive of consciousness, or the simple act of knowing, as belonging to sense impressions, yet no thought exists for us except in consciousness. It may seem strange that a power transcending the senses, so common as this, and so necessary to recognize in discussing the supernatural, should be ignored, but to deny it is to sweep away the foundations of intelligence and reasoning, and to admit it opens the door at once for the admission of the supernatural. If we mean by nature only that which appeals to the senses we are continually in conscious contact with the supernatural. For as Robert South says, the understanding is "not only an open window but itself the prospect."

Let us not however be led into any confusion by an uncertain or careless use of the word supernatural. If a spirit after death should return to its body and give undeniable evidence of its identity, the fact that it had been able to exist without the body would be recognized, and the event would undoubtedly be called supernatural. If such spirits exist, then they exist as supernatural beings whether they reveal themselves through nature or not. If this be true we are shut up to the dilemma of believing that there is a realm of supernatural beings, or that death ends all. But if we accept the doctrine of a future

life the question may be fairly asked when does the spirit become supernatural? Is it not a reasonable belief that the soul of man has a two-fold relationship, that it is allied to the natural world by birth and dependence on the body for its earthly development and manifestation, and allied to the supernatural in the character of its powers, its aspirations and its destiny? If we make a clear margin between the natural and the supernatural, may it not be narrower than we sometimes think? Is not the boundary one that may be crossed? Is there not a unity of which the mind gets a glimpse? As the oak tree springs from the acorn, the bird from the egg, the butterfly from the worm, what is there unreasonable in the supposition that this part of man, which even under earthly limitations seems allied to the supernatural, should at some time assume a still higher condition and still higher powers? While the soul in its relations to physical nature, which is the sphere or realm of all the laws of physical philosophy, might from one aspect be justly called supernatural, yet in its activities as they are manifested it is so far conformable to laws that are inferred from nature, that it seems better to extend our conception of nature and add to it the powers of the mind. That which it is right to insist upon is, that there is in man a power above physical nature, and one that places him in the attitude of anticipating a realm of existence still above that to which he has attained.

If still further evidence of the distinction between mind and sense, and of the affinity of the mind to

the supernatural, be required it may be found in the relation of mind to time and space. One of the most marked characteristics of the supernatural, as we conceive of it, is its comparative freedom from these limitations. The soul of man has a similar freedom. Its limitations in these respects seem mainly due to its dependence on the body. With every sense-perception there is always the affirmation of here and now. In so far the mind is limited by the conditions of time and space. But in its higher powers it is not so limited. It thinks of events that took place in the far distant past and in far off places or without connecting them with time and place, and of events to come in the far distant future, or that may never be realized. And it is moved by these thoughts. If one says these ideas are only fancies and have no reality, and that there is nothing by which they can be tested this is the very burden of the contention. They have no such reality as a waterfall, or a current of electricity, and their weight or measure cannot be told. They may vanish into thinner than thin air and leave nature as though they had not been. There is no accounting for them as products of nature, yet no purposed act of man is without them. Being used they are not exhausted like the forces of nature, but often increase in intensity.

Not real, like iron and stone, yet they are the mainspring of all the great achievements of the race. Whatever war is waged, whatever battle is fought, whatever scheme is pursued or invention devised, whatever state is established or institution organized,

the idea always goes before the fact, and is essential to its realization. It is the pattern after which things are brought into being, or by which things are brought to pass. Men believe in the idea as a power in the world. So dominating is it that there is no complete and consistent conception of a plan for attaining an end that does not bring conviction to the mind of the contriver that success is already within his grasp. A Napoleon is halted in his victorious march by dark and rugged mountains. He stops and thinks. In his mind he sees the passage opened. He organizes victory over this new foe with an idea before his army takes another step. He looks again at the frowning mountain and says "The Alps! the Alps! there are no Alps." When again the command to march is given the effort is energized and directed by the idea and in spite of snow and ice and falling rock, in spite of hostile forces in narrow pass and deep ravine and on the mountain side and highest peak he gains the other side and victory is won. A Roebling stands on the bank of East River and sees the tide of waters go untiringly by, and watches the tide of passengers and freight anxiously waiting or laboriously struggling for passage to the other side. Months and years roll on. The tide of waters does not cease. The tide of passengers swells to an angry mob. The crowds grow more dense, the delays more aggravating, and the disappointments of business and pleasure multiply. Roebling thinks. There comes to his mind, without stroke of hammer or heat of forge, the idea of a structure that would open free and continuous

passage from side to side both day and night and when you will, and when the idea is complete he says, "Brooklyn bridge, be!" and Brooklyn bridge is.

One must be aware in writing thus on this subject that some one will perhaps say, "O, that question of the origin of ideas is as old as Plato's theory of pre-existence, and I supposed it had been settled by physical philosophy long ago, and that Herbert Spencer especially had given it the *coup de grace*." No, it is a question that pure physical philosophy cannot reach, much less settle. All it can say is, "I know nothing of the coming of ideas into consciousness." But the question will come up and will down at no man's bidding.

"Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality,"

is but one of many phases of the general question that finds no answer in the research of physical forces. The question is perennial. This fact alone, the fact that for more than two thousand years this problem in one form or another has been knocking at the gates of the understanding and demanding solution, should give one pause if he is larger than his physical theories—and it is not possible for his theories to be greater than himself—if he cares more for himself than for his philosophy. Gorgons and "dire chimeras and enchanted isles" were long since relegated to the nursery, but study of the idea grows more intense as the ages pass, and it becomes more important in gaining mastery over the physical world. Without it physical philosophy itself could not have been, and if it could have been it would

have been impotent for any good.

Should it be so easy to believe in the power of the idea to stir the human soul to liveliest thought and bravest deed, and to realize itself in the physical world, and yet incredible that He on whose patterns the foundations of the earth were laid should reveal himself as a living power, and as able to exercise his will in directing the creatures of his hand?

As we found that there was absolutely no force in the presumption that the supernatural birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ might be scientifically proved to be impossible, so we now conclude, considering all the logical absurdities it necessitates, that the argument for the incredibility of the supernatural based on such uniformity as has been observed is absolutely without force. The affinity of the natural for the supernatural forbids the divorce.

CHAPTER IV

THE REIGN OF LAW

MANY realms, not one, and no known law perfect, or good for all realms.

Probably the most effective argument against the supernatural, in the mind of the skeptic of scientific modes of thinking at the present day, is based on his conception of the reign of law. This is a step in advance of the claim of uniformity, or a blind confidence in the sufficiency of one's experience of the regularity of nature. It does not deny the possibility, or even the probability, of the existence of beings superior to the dwellers on this earth, or even of a supreme being. It maintains the impropriety and inconsistency of the interference of any such beings in the events of this world, which seems limited and exclusively subject to laws of its own. The conception seems rather to necessitate the conception of a lawgiver, as is quite generally admitted, but it is a realm by itself. There is apparently so much force in this argument as seriously to affect some very candid men, and it deserves a most careful consideration.

Accepting the meaning of the word law before described, and even going so far as to grant that it may have its source in the mind of a supreme ruler of this and other worlds, yet as we know it it belongs to this realm and it may be said that it ought to be the surest guide to conduct which we can have,

and the most reliable evidence of what we ought to expect. We should trust the giver of the law to support it, or at least not to interfere with it, so long as it is law. Nor should he allow another to interfere between himself and his subjects. In the case even of an earthly king the law was established to assure the subjects that the ruler would not exact different conduct, or a different penalty from that prescribed by the law. If another was allowed to interfere and place the subject beyond the protection of the ruler the claim of authority was abrogated. Why then, it may be asked in all confidence, why should not we who are placed in this world, where we have deciphered so many of the laws of creation, trust to these laws for guidance, and hold them as inviolable? We have learned slowly, but surely, that we cannot violate the laws of health without suffering the penalty. We can trust to nature to do all that the laws of heat and the laws of mechanics prescribe, and that the penalties which they prescribe for violation will be inexorably enforced. Why should we not hold as the strongest possible belief that these laws stand as deputy of the creator to mark the limits of responsibility and duty? This is a fair question and honestly asked, and it requires a substantial and unequivocal reply.

This is the answer in brief: while we are placed in a physical world where physical law is writ large, we are spiritual beings and are placed in a world of moral and spiritual laws as well, and these laws we recognize from childhood as higher than physical laws. That they were designed for our guidance in

a higher sense than the physical laws is fittingly manifest in the fact that the race discovered them and the child learns them earlier than the laws of nature. Mere physical existence is subject to physical laws alone, but moral beings have other laws as well. If the two classes of law seem to us to conflict in their claims to control our conduct or belief, there should be no hesitation as to which has the higher claims. Injury to the body comes from rescuing a child from the fire. But the moral law is supreme with us in peril, and we risk life to save the life of the child. The law of self-preservation is called the first law of nature, but it will never be used to justify the mountain climber who cuts the rope just beyond him, and lets his fellow travelers go over the cliff to their death in the abyss below because he feared the rope would break, and life is dear to him now. Should we think it strange that physical laws seem thus to be in conflict with moral laws as a guide to conduct, we may ask if it is not more strange that in the same realm, whether physical or moral, there are forces that act against one another to the destruction of that which has been created. And it will not harmonize the laws to eliminate the law-giver. There is something deeper than sentiment in the tribute of Lanier to his wife's eyes,

I marvel that God made you mine,
For when He frowns, 'tis then ye shine.

It all goes to show an imperfection in our understanding of creative wisdom.

We have it thus forced upon our minds that what we call law is very imperfect. We should not suppose that any event is a violation of law in any other sense than that of superior claims such as the brave fireman recognizes when he saves the child from death. And when we speak of superior claims we do not mean those that outweigh or overmatch in some commercial sense the lower claims. They are superior in kind, not in respect to uniformity of results. The two are not weighed in the same scales. Let each be supreme in its own sphere. When the mind deals with matter it does it according to the laws of matter, but it does it intelligently and with moral and spiritual purposes. And there may be physical forces outside any laws yet discovered, which a higher intelligence may use. We can set no limit to what a supreme intelligence may do by the use of forces inherent in matter, for we do not know what all these forces are, nor perfectly even what any one of them is.

We must take a step still farther. A fact of great significance in considering the reign of law is, that even in what is called nature in its narrowest sense, laws are not so universal as our statements of them seem to imply. In our finite understanding, and our inability to express our thoughts, we cannot frame any statement, or give expression to any conception of physical law which we are sure has no exception. Modify and limit it as we will we are not certain of having stated the exact and the whole truth. Exceptions are said to prove a law. But not a perfect law. A single exception proves that a law

is not the true law, but an accommodation to an imperfect understanding. The law of attraction has its limitations, but we cannot state them in a way to be sure we are stating the exact truth. According to this law any two atoms in space attract each other with a force that increases as the square of the distance between them diminishes, with an unknown "but." As the atoms come close together the force increases enormously, and if they should come into absolute contact it would require, mathematically, an infinite force to separate them. Let all the atoms of a body come thus into contact and it would require an infinite force to divide it. Let two such bodies come into absolute contact and they could not be again separated. Let all matter be thus brought together and only infinite power could break it up into separate objects. But before any two atoms absolutely touch each other another law is supposed to exist in direct opposition to the law of attraction. When two atoms come within a very small distance there is developed a repelling force which increases as the distance diminishes until it becomes mathematically infinite and absolute contact is impossible except under infinite pressure. But what the limits of distance are we cannot tell, nor do we know whether the forces cease to act according to their law, or whether at a certain distance there is a transformation of force, or what the conditions of the case may be. Of this much we are certain, that matter exists subject to two laws that are opposed to each other, and we cannot make a universal statement of either law limited in any

known way so as to make it absolutely true.

There are separate realms for the different laws of motion. If a body is moved by two forces at the same time it moves in a direction between the directions of the two forces. A star moves in a direction determined by its momentum and the attractions of all the other stars in space. But the waves on the surface of the sea, the waves of air started by the human voice, and the waves of light coming from a tapir or from the heavenly spheres, cross one another without loss, and each goes on its separate way.

The presence of life in some way interferes with the action of the law of gravity, or rather the application of the law to explain the action of matter. The presence of life dominates it. The circulation of sap in a tree, which results in raising large quantities of matter to a great height, ceases when life is gone.

The existence of ether, which serves as wings of light as is supposed, depends for its serviceableness upon the very fact that it does not yield to the law of gravity, and Newton's great law limps when it comes to that. Science is said to have had its beginning and to have made its growth by the use of the yard stick and balance. The ether does not respond to either standard of judgment, yet science not only does not deny its existence but assumes it to explain many natural phenomena.

The laws of living organisms change during life. They change in their manifestation in respect to growth, the development of powers, and in decay from infancy to old age. Life is divided, accordingly,

into distinctly marked stages. The moral life also has its stages in the application of law. In the enforcement of obedience both family government and the state recognize the necessity of change in the moral law as the child passes from infancy to maturity.

These various forms in which law has to be stated to adapt it to the variety of cases to which it must be applied, and the apparent inconsistencies we meet, as in the case of attraction and repulsion, which require an utterly unreasoning and indefinite limitation of the laws, make it seem almost necessary to change the wording of our present theme and speak of the reign of laws rather than the reign of law.

We started out in the discussion of law with the assumption that nature is under the dominion of law; that law, although not a compelling power of itself, is the ideal pattern to which all things must for some reason conform. But a single exception would break down the law and we were not able to find any one law universal. We then found that there was no division of nature into distinct realms over which a particular law or set of laws is consistently, exclusively and adequately applicable. Much less do we find a supreme law over all of nature. What does it mean that we can find no realm of nature in which we find a single law supreme? What does it mean that laws multiply as we get nearer to nature and think we understand it better? It can only mean this, that the original pattern of nature was in a free will, and that the term law only relates to a finite understanding of that pattern, not to the

understanding which the Creator has of his work. His understanding of it is complete and perfect, and extends to the utmost limits of detail to which his power extends. He knows nature in all its parts and elements. He does not need to comprehend things, that is to hold a multitude of things together under one common, general notion, such as man uses to reason and explain. He understands each individual in itself, however small and of whatever kind it may be. His will is so perfect and self-consistent that however it manifests itself in nature she presents consistent views of the will of the Creator. Man gets glimpses of these views and calls them laws. Law is in fact but the human understanding of the consistency and harmony of the Creator's will. This understanding is more or less true, but will never arrive at complete perfection till the finite can understand the infinite.

The harmony of nature's laws as seen in the antagonisms of living creatures is certainly not so complete and perfect as to forbid the addition of another note, now not heard by human ear, to lift the soul to a higher conception of a possible harmony for man. There is no reason for us to suppose that the reign of law, such as it is, which is only man's conception, stands in the way of an additional revelation of the creator's will. It offers no obstacle to the introduction of a higher intelligence capable of directing earth's forces to higher ends and revealing new laws for human guidance.

It is no objection to the introduction of a higher cause to say that in the history of nature there has

been an upward tendency which has shown some uniformity of progress. This uniformity is largely but apparent and only holds good of the more general views of development. More and more we are coming to see that advances are made by stages, or by leaps and bounds, and that there have been long periods of waiting for preparation to make another advance. It is like the siege of a city. Work is going on all the time, but there are times for advance and attack which must be preceded by periods of preparation. This is the history of geological development. The azoic age is sharply separated from fossil bearing rocks. The lines that mark the boundaries of the different strata of the earth's crust are distinct. The glacial and the carboniferous periods are clearly defined. These are all evidences of sudden changes taking place in the progress of geologic development. Advances in organic life follow the same law. There is a period for the growth of the brain, another for the limbs, another for increase of stature. The same law holds good for intelligence. Discoveries, inventions and improvements must be supported by something outside of themselves or they will come to naught. Two things are required for real advancement, something to grow, and something to support growth. Without the first there is only addition, not growth; without the second there is no increase. The earth with its forms and forces has been able to support all of the advances that have been made. Why may it not be that the Creator's plans extend this law to a wider field and include a progressive revelation of his will for higher and

higher ends, using nature in a manner to suit the ends in view? Why may we not suppose that on that portion of nature which presents only a dark background he may yet paint a picture more harmonious and with brighter hues than any that have preceded it? If it is claimed that he has revealed himself from time to time in the past in such a progressive manner, it is giving earth all her due to say she has been prepared to support these different forms of revelation as they have come.

CHAPTER V

CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS

INSTEAD of resting on the conclusions reached in the above argument, many religious persons seem willing to give way to the claims of those skeptics who hold that the case is scientifically closed against all belief in the supernatural. They seem to be willing to do this because they think that even a belief in the supernatural birth and resurrection of Christ is not important to a Christian life. To make the conclusions we have reached seem important to such, assuming that they appreciate the value of Christian living, it is necessary to treat briefly the relation of a belief in the supernatural birth and resurrection of Christ to the development of Christian Consciousness.

If any one fears that the expression "Christian Consciousness" may be used obscurely or ambiguously, or perhaps in a mystical sense, he may be assured at the outset that the term does not refer to any doubtful interpretation of the mental state, nor to any peculiar consciousness that grows out of some occult cause. Like consciousness in general, it refers to a condition of the mind as the result of the perception and belief of the truth, or of that which seems the truth. By Christian Consciousness, then, must be meant the state of the mind which results

from a knowledge and belief of the truth about Christ. What are the basal truths about Christ, the knowledge or belief of which determines the Christian's state of mind?

1. He believes in the forgiveness of sins`
2. He believes in Christ's claims upon his service.
3. He believes in a future life with Christ.

Let us consider these beliefs in order, and ask ourselves if it makes no difference with the state of our minds as to these beliefs whether we accept the supernatural birth and resurrection of Christ as veritable facts or not.

First, we believe in the forgiveness of sins. This is not a commercial but a moral fact. Sin involves the character of the sinner, the rights of some one immediately wronged, the well-being of every person directly or indirectly affected by the act, and some organic whole whose function it is to enforce justice. Sin is certainly always a mistake, but not all mistakes are sins. Sin is always a misfortune, but not all that we call misfortune is sin. To the refusal to acknowledge the existense of such a character in human conduct the pains of conscience and the universal enforcement of criminal law should be a sufficient answer. Any restoration of the sinner must be as broad as the offense. To answer the question of Job, "How can man be just with God?" the soul has sounded its deepest depths. And it may be said that the height to which a sinful man can hope to rise is measured by the extent to which he is conscious of the ill-desert of sin. When the Psalmist says, "As is thy fear so is thy wrath," he

uses the human as the measure of the consciousness of its answering divine. Some conception of a distinction between sin and holiness is fundamental to a moral being in a world where temptations are rife, as a distinction between loyalty and treason is fundamental to good citizenship in times of civil strife. On the field of Gettysburg there is a stone that is placed at what is called the high-water mark of the Confederacy. But it does not signify the low-water mark of the Federal Union. Such a stone would be placed at Washington, and it would bear the date when the doctrine was proclaimed that there was no ground on which loyal feet could stand in a contest against disloyalty. Distrust, gloom and despair were fast settling down over all the Northern coasts. The turning point in the national crisis was when there echoed through the land, from New Orleans to the Great Lakes, the ringing words from the Treasury Department, "If any man attempts to haul down the American flag, shoot him on the spot." Then did hope and pride and devotion begin to rise above the mists and fogs and miasmas that had gathered under the sunless skies of a hopeless sentimental anarchy. At times hope quickened, and at times it declined, but this spirit never waned again till the loyalty of the North won back the loyalty of the South and brought all together under one flag.

But this is a feeble illustration. Nations may come upon the stage and nations may perish. Loyalty to the king may become loyalty to the commonwealth; we may obey Napoleon today and Louis tomorrow, feeling, perhaps, a disappointment but no

remorse. But through all the changes that come over the race and the fortunes of individuals a consciousness of right and wrong always abides. To obscure the distinction may seem to narrow the chasm, but it only dims the view we take of the height and depth to which a moral being may reach.

The Christian finds an answer to Job's question in forgiveness and cleansing through the blood of Christ.

But forgiveness is essentially a supernatural act. Physical nature has no suggestion of this doctrine. From nature we learn that results depend upon action, not belief. It seems to be the most important purpose of the order of nature to teach this lesson. That this is absolutely true in the realm of physical nature cannot be doubted by any class of thinkers, and if mental states require a corresponding physical state, as psychologists maintain, there can be nothing in the behavior of the mind to suggest forgiveness. On the ground of natural law the parent or teacher who tries to make a bad boy think he may be forgiven, in any proper sense of the word, is not only teaching that which cannot be fundamentally true, but by leading the child to false beliefs is contributing to his intellectual and physical degeneracy. Even without such psychological reasoning there is the natural feeling that such instruction is one of the most delicate duties of family, social and civic organization, and that it requires the most careful treatment and good judgment to avoid positive injury to the person who is told that he is forgiven. Logically followed no approved method of education

leads to the exercise of forgiveness. Works on the science of education find no place in their scheme for a treatment of that theme. It would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to find in any scientific treatise on education even a reference to forgiveness as a means of mental training. The science of psychology does not mention it. No body of civil law or treatise on jurisprudence has a line of reasoning leading up to it. In a limited sense the teacher practices forgiveness and tries to impress pupils with the importance of exercising it, but it is a commercial argument urging that they are sometimes in need of forgiveness themselves. The state arbitrarily provides for pardon that remits the penalty of the law, or some part of it, in consideration of the possible danger of injustice in administration, or of an undeserved degree of hardship, but forgiveness is too delicate, elusive and sacred a principle to find any place in a system of hard and fast laws of any humanly devised science. Apparently, as by common consent, only theology, the science of God, finds a fit setting for it.

If physical law knows no forgiveness, and mental science knows no forgiveness that can blot out a wrong committed, and neither the science of mental development nor civil law has a place for it, where does the Christian find adequate ground for trusting in it? It would seem that unless his confidence is based on something higher than nature his faith is unwarranted, and he is only leading a life of imaginary peace and security.

But what would it mean to blot out the word for-

givenness from the vocabulary of the race? Let us see if one may reasonably look to anything higher than nature to find forgiveness. Take an analogy. Two travelers call on a man at his home and borrow his gun. They refuse to return it. He has a remedy in the local court. But being in possession of his weapon they seize upon the man himself and carry him to the coast. An appeal may be made to the state, which has grounds for a criminal action, and the man himself cannot compromise this right even to gain his liberty. But before the state can act they hurry him on shipboard and put out to sea, to carry their victim to a slave market. Now an element appears which, although in it from the beginning, was not manifest before, that takes it out of the hands of the person assaulted, out of the hands of the local authorities, out of the hands of the state, and brings it before the tribunal of the civilized nations of the earth. There is a law of humanity more sacred than private claims and higher than local legislation. No private party, no one of the inferior tribunals can interpose a rightful objection or present a claim for possession of the offender. The case must be tried under the provisions of the law of nations. Is it not in the nature of sin to make the sinner amenable to a higher tribunal than physical law? higher than the judgment pronounced by his neighbors? higher than the authority of any state? a tribunal before which the conscience stands condemned regardless of all the courts below? It matters not if the slave dealers were not familiar with the law of nations. They knew well enough the character of their act.

The wrong-doer often finds his deeds do not end with his intended victim. Conscience does not limit the review of the case to a single sufferer at his behest. Perhaps results are self-perpetuating, and extend to realms of which we take little account. The court of last resort needs to be high enough to have jurisdiction of the whole case. If there is such a court, when we who have guilty consciences come before it we shall be tried in accordance with its laws and bear the sentence imposed by it. May we not hope that in this court provision will be found for forgiveness?

To provide for the forgiveness of men was the controlling purpose of the Father in giving up his Son, the controlling purpose of the Son in coming to the earth and fulfilling the law, and he himself said his blood was shed for many for the remission of sins. We cannot say but it would have been possible for the divine and human to unite after a human birth of Christ, but it is just as easy to believe the gospel story of the supernatural birth as to believe in a divine-human person supernaturally resulting from a union brought about in the growing child. But it makes a world-wide difference in Christian consciousness whether our trust for forgiveness is based on the promise and merit of one who is but a unit in a system where we have not been able to find a syllable of forgiveness mentioned, or one who has come down from a higher realm where forgiveness may possibly be found. And it makes a difference whether the promise, the life and the death of him for whose sake we hope to be for-

given are the promise, the life and the death of a merely human being, or of a supernatural being coming to earth with knowledge, authority and power, an advocate who knows the laws of the realm to which our case may go.

Secondly. We believe in Christ's right to claim our service. When the young ruler asked how he might obtain eternal life, and Jesus said, take up the cross and follow me, he did not mean simply that the young man should follow on, go wherever he went, and bear him company with his personal presence through life, but he must be prepared for the extremity of sacrifice, and follow his commands though obedience should lead to death. It meant more than this. It meant more than simply willingness to die for him. What could the expression "bear the cross" have meant when used by Christ before his own crucifixion, before he had sanctified it in innocence with his bleeding hands and feet and side? Yet he had declared more than once that it was a requisite for true discipleship. In the common language of the times, to bear the cross meant to go to a felon's doom. It was the sign of the greatest criminality and the most unworthy of characters. It was so distinct a mark of vileness and criminality as to make it a fit expression to represent figuratively the pangs of a guilty conscience. Thus Plutarch says, "Every malefactor bears forth on his body his own cross, which depravity builds out of itself upon itself as a sort of demiurge of a woful life." The word does not seem ever to have been used except with this moral taint. What was it to follow

Jesus? The follower of a philosophy is one who believes in his philosophy. The follower of Mohammed is one who seeks to establish his religion. The follower of a prince is one who puts himself under his command and renders implicit obedience as he is led forth to gain a kingdom. Jesus required obedience as a prince. To take up the cross and follow him was to accept him and his command as the standard of duty and righteousness, though obedience might lead to the condemnation of his followers as transgressors against the sacred customs of the masses of men and of men with authority to punish and put to death. The cross which always signified some kind of base crime to the Greek and Roman, must be accepted by the followers of Jesus as the badge of the highest virtue when borne in obeying his word. This word was to be henceforth the test of virtuous conduct. Peter recognized the change of standards when brought before the Sanhedrim for disobeying its injunctions, and he answered the charge with the appeal, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to harken unto you more than unto God judge ye."

Such is the service which the Christian world has always believed it owes to Christ, and not only is the word of Jesus all the sanction his followers require for their conduct, but he remains the personal head of his people and the director of their lives. It is not a philosophy of life that may be read and studied, or perhaps evolved from reason. It is a reasonable service, but such as would never be evolved in the human mind by the study of anything

less than the life the character and the teaching of Jesus. The service is due and is gladly paid to a conscious being who regards his followers with individual interest and has claims upon them individually, not only for what he has done for them but for what he is doing now, and for what he will continue to be for them to all eternity.

Can it be necessary to ask if it makes any difference with the Christian's view of service whether or not he believes in the supernatural birth and resurrection of Christ? What would become of the Christian sense of service due if Jesus was thought of only as a divinely inspired man? The Christian's service is pledged to Christ personally for time and eternity. To what kind of a man would any one voluntarily make such a pledge? There is but one man and that is the God-man, Christ Jesus, who was from the beginning and reigneth forevermore.

An illustration of what service means is related by a friend as these lines are written. A hard-working man who had recently lost his wife and had no family left, was accosted one morning with the question, "What are you doing now?" His answer was, "Not much of anything. I tell you what, I have been thinking a lot lately, thinking hard, and I have said to myself, 'Bill, whom are you working for?'" It makes a world-wide difference with the Christian's consciousness which cannot be glossed over, whether we are working to carry out the plans and purposes of some one who lived and died, as other men live and die, nearly two thousand years ago, or of one who was filled with all the fulness of

the God-head and who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

In the third place the Christian believes in a future life with Christ. From the nature of human reason this hope can only be presented to the eye of faith. We can have no knowledge by experience. Yet to the question, "If a man die shall he live again?" there has been all but a united chorus in the affirmative from all human voices. In the light of what is called nature the question and answer present one of the most remarkable phenomena in history. There is, apparently there can be, nothing in experience of the senses to suggest even the thought, much less to excite the hope of a life after death. To the senses death means absolutely the cessation of life.

Yet the mass of the world's literature assumes that there is a spirit world, and that the soul of man lives after it leaves the body. The ancient Hebrew literature alone of all national literature is reticent. If the people assumed a future life their literature seems to have had only the purpose of setting forth the importance of right living in this world. But in every other literature death and a life to come are made the back-ground of every great picture of the human race. The literature of eastern, southern and central Asia, the stony volumes of Egyptian literature; the great epics of the race, the tragedies of Greece and Rome; the philosophies of Plato, Cicero and Plutarch, the Scandinavian Sagas; poetry, oratory and mythology as well as history, all tell of man's belief in the existence of a conscious

soul after death.

But with all these manifestations of a belief in a future life the faith, if it can be called such, has been but a trembling hope. In how many ways the philosophers and best men of every age have tried to bolster up this hope is a familiar story, and they have not tried to conceal the fact that their reasons have come far short of a final demonstration even to themselves. The one thing proved is the natural longing the soul has for an assurance of immortality and the dread of dropping into nothingness. Belief in the resurrection of Christ is the seal to the Christian's hope of eternal life, to the assurance of the blessedness of that life, and to a worthy mission on this earth. Socrates spent the whole of his last day with his friends setting forth his reasons for believing in immortality while waiting for the hemlock to come with the coming of darkness and then he told them he had not been rehearsing these arguments to convince them of immortality, but to convince himself, for he was going where he would meet the truth, and if he was wrong he would lose nothing since he would know nothing, but if his arguments were just it would be a great gain for him to go to the other world with the belief that he was to have a future that would complete the life begun here.

The effect on Christian consciousness, then, of denying the eternal divinity of Christ and his supernatural birth and resurrection, if such unbelief should become the settled and unquestioning state of the so-called Christian world, would necessarily be to destroy all the grounds of hope of forgiveness of

sins, to take away all the stronger motives to a zealous and virtuous life, and to destroy the foundations of faith in a life to come.

CHAPTER VI

ATONEMENT UNIVERSAL—FORGIVENESS LIMITED

SOME years ago the Bible Student and Teacher quoted a statement from a theological professor, and has more recently quoted the same again that "Sin can not be atoned for, although it may be forgiven." If he had said "Sin can not be forgiven although it may be atoned for," it would not have seemed so unreasonable. Atonement does not necessarily imply acceptance by the wrongdoer nor his release from the consequences of his wrong. In a broad sense it is the suffering which one person undergoes for the conduct of another.

Atonement, according to its etymology, is fundamental in the constitution of nature. There is a oneness of the body such that if one member suffers the body as a whole suffers with it. There is a oneness of the ocean depths such that a stone dropped upon the surface at one place gives a shock which the whole ocean feels. There is such a oneness of the universe that every jar, material, mental or moral, extends beyond its origin to the universe as a whole. All suffer with the one, each part suffers with all.

I. It is necessary to lay down this postulate in order to formulate the law that underlies the fact of atonement. We may not call it atonement until we rise in the scale of being to conscious voluntary per-

sonality, but the underlying fact that one individuality bears the effect of another's actions is found in all the universe so far as we know it. It is not disputed in discussions of the material world. It is not doubted that there is a correspondence between the mind and the brain that results in uniform relations between the intellectual and the material world. The consequences of moral conduct that afflict society are borne to a traceable extent by tens, by hundreds of individuals, or by nations. Whether there can exist such a unity between the Creator and the creature that the Creator can bear the sins of the creature or not, man's reason may not be able to conclude, but if such a unity is established or does exist the relationship would bear a likeness to the oneness of the universe that we are familiar with. It would be a striking example of the application of a natural law to the spiritual world.

There are also indications in nature that the suffering of one may be substituted for that of another. Not necessarily must, but may. In matter motion and energy are transmitted, and the law of equal action and reaction is a case of must. But in actions that have a moral quality, and in individuals that have a moral character we can only say may. Commercial transactions have a moral character, but one person may pay the debt of another and have it discharged. Parents pay for the evil conduct of wayward children. The children may not appreciate it, but they enjoy a kind of immunity for which the parents pay.

It is sometimes maintained that criminals violate

their moral natures to such an extent that they entirely destroy the faculty of conscience. Some criminologists hold to this belief. Against it, however, is the fact that criminals apparently the most degraded are sometimes so overcome by the sense of guilt as to confess and voluntarily offer themselves for punishment. And the history of criminals convicted by the courts reveals a deeper depth of conscience than this. There may be confession without repentance or any show of the sense of guilt. What is the motive? A criminal who can bear the recollection of the sufferings of innocent persons whom he has wronged for his own gain and apparently without the least remorse at the time or afterward, can not so easily endure to have an innocent person suffer for the crime in his stead. A large number of cases of confession where there had been no suspicion of guilt has recently been collected from the court records that reveal the existence of conscience in this lower stratum of human sensibility where the criminals showed little or no sorrow for the crimes themselves. Five out of eleven given in detail were murder cases, and the rest burglary, forgery, perjury and theft. One confession was false and one appeared to be a case of real repentance, but in each of the other nine, confession was apparently induced solely by the fact that guilt and punishment were legally brought home to innocent persons. Two or three cases may be cited as examples. A young man was charged with killing his uncle, a banker. He was defended by an attorney who knew he was innocent and who thought the defense an easy one.

But much to the attorney's surprise his client was convicted. On the announcement of the verdict the attorney's face lost its color, his eyes blazed, and he rose and said to the court, "I offer you the last convincing proof of my client's innocence. It was I and I alone, that killed that old man." The attorney was tried, convicted and condemned to death.

In another case a woman was brutally murdered and the murderer was tried and convicted. But so strong was the evidence of his innocence that the police thought to fix the guilt on two other suspected persons. When the murderer heard of the new arrests and of his own impending release, instead of expressing joy he was much depressed till at last he called for the clergyman who had attended him and confessed his own guilt and was formally tried and condemned to death. His answer to those who asked the reason for confessing was that while he would answer to heaven for the death of the woman he would not have to answer for the death of these two men.

In another case after an innocent person had been declared guilty the real criminal confessed but the judge refused to put him on trial on the ground that the state had convicted one man of the crime and had proved that but one man could have been engaged in it. The innocent person was given a suspended sentence and the real culprit was set free.

Such considerations make it too clear for dispute that there is a common law in accordance with which action and conduct are carried over in their results from one individual to another, consciously or

unconsciously, and it is apparently true that the keenest edged natural punishment, the reflection that reaches a conscience last of all, is the knowledge that an innocent person is exposed to the punishment that belongs to one's own guilt.

II. But the case of forgiveness differs from that of atonement as does its law. There is a commercial sense in which a limited forgiveness may be possible, but it leaves out the more important moral element. What matters it that Agrippina could say of her son "Let him slay me if only he can be made Emperor," and could overlook it when he sought her destruction by sinking the ship on board of which he had sent her forth! She saved her life for a brief time but only to suffer a more cruel death. A pretense of forgiveness gave her no advantage and only aggravated the guilt of Nero.

To be complete forgiveness must be considered from three points of view. In the first place, the person pronouncing the word must have his claim. To give any force to his word his attitude toward the wrongdoer or toward the act must be changed. In the second place, all others who have suffered directly or indirectly must be satisfied for the wrong they have suffered or forgiveness could only be partial. In the third place, the reaction of the wrong doing on the character of the guilty person must be annulled and the character restored to make forgiveness real to him.

III. Whence is the word, I forgive, to be drawn that can comprehend these three points of view and answer to every claim?

1. In the deepest sense nature knows no forgiveness. Physical nature has no suggestion of the doctrine. Even in the case of the body, which is so subordinate to the mind, the physical does not yield a tittle from the law of persistence. The vocabulary of physical science has no word for forgiveness.

From physical nature we learn that results depend upon action, not belief. It seems to be the most important purpose of the order of nature to teach this lesson. That this law of uniformity holds true in the realm of physical nature cannot be doubted; and in so far as mental states require corresponding physical states, there can be nothing in the behavior of the mind, when considered fundamentally, to suggest forgiveness. We must believe that on the ground of natural law the parent or teacher who tells a bad boy that he may be forgiven, in any proper sense of the word, is not only teaching that which cannot be essentially true, but by leading the child to false beliefs he is contributing to his intellectual and physical degeneracy. Even without psychological reasoning there is the natural feeling that such instruction is one of the most uncertain and delicate duties of family, social and civic organization, and that to avoid injuring the person who is told he will be forgiven requires the most careful limitations and good judgment.

2. The three-fold aspect must always be kept in view. Improvement in the child's own character must be considered the highest end; and this is not subject to the will of the injured parties. No approved method of education leads logically to the ex-

ercise of forgiveness. Works on the science of education have no place in their scheme for a treatment of this theme. We would search in vain to find in scientific treatises on education even a reference to forgiveness as a means of mental training.

As said in the chapter on Christian Consciousness the science of psychology does not speak of forgiveness. It may speak of law and crime, and of irregular and abnormal states of mind, but it has no plea for forgiveness. It may recognize minds so infirm or distorted as not to be more responsible than a clod of earth, and say we must not regard their faults as moral. Injurious actions must be overlooked and physically guarded against. But punishment and forgiveness are incomprehensible terms in such a case. The science may even go so far as to give volumes to the discussion of the question whether crime is crime that ought to be punished, or only error that ought to be instructed, but it has no chapter on forgiveness.

No body of civil law treats of forgiveness. No treatise on jurisprudence discovers a line of legal reasoning which leads even to its discussion. Decisions of the courts base no conclusions on its principles. It has no principles which are involved in the laws which guard human rights.

Drummond treats learnedly, elaborately and forcibly of Natural Law in the Spiritual World, and if he could have found in nature a clear word of forgiveness we might have expected him to repeat it. But he does not appear to have met it anywhere in nature. Bishop Butler, who, perhaps, treated the

analogies of religion to the course of nature at greater length and with greater subtlety than any other writer, and sought diligently for the word with an apparent predisposition to find it if possible, concludes there is nothing in nature to lead the sinner to hope to escape the consequences of his sins. The most he can say is, that nature, by delaying punishments, by rendering men willing to bear each other's burdens and otherwise, shows a compassion for suffering such as to forbid us to deny, through our ignorance, a possible provision for forgiveness for the future world. But he concludes with this profound observation: "Upon the whole, then, had the laws, the general laws of God's government, been permitted to operate without any interposition in our behalf, the future punishment, for anything we know to the contrary, or have reason to think, must inevitably have followed, notwithstanding anything we could have done to prevent it."

If the teacher tries to impress the importance of forgiveness on his pupils, he does it by the use of the lower commercial argument that the pupil himself may sometimes need forgiveness. If the law provides for the pardon of a criminal it is distinctly in consideration of the possible danger of injustice in administration, or of an undeserved degree of hardship in the enforcement of laws which at best are imperfect. Forgiveness is too delicate, elusive and sacred a principle to find a place in any system of the hard and fast laws of any humanly devised science. Apparently, as by common consent, only theology, the science of God, finds a fit setting for it.

2. To pronounce the word forgiveness is not real forgiveness unless the word is with power. To be real it must have the power to reach and change the character reacted upon by the wrong doing, and, to be adequate, it must have authority to speak for all who have been wronged. One reason why the word is so loosely used is that when the wrong doer does not change the injured party changes in his attitude toward the act, he lowers his standard of right and wrong and confuses the distinctions of right and wrong that are inherent in morals. He lowers the high moral ideal of the spiritual being to a commercial basis. But this is not forgiveness in any deep sense.

The principle of atonement is thus seen everywhere in the development of the universe in all its stages from mere atomic motion to the highest development of mental and spiritual life. It is natural. But forgiveness, that is real and complete forgiveness, if such there be, must be supernatural.

Sin is alien to the perfect order of the universe. Forgiveness to be effective must have its source in a higher realm.

3. If one finds fault with the natural conditions that render it necessary for the innocent to suffer with the guilty, let him also consider the advantages that depend upon these same conditions. Our happiness and our misery are inseparably bound up in the community of interest that makes the unity of the human race an illustrious example of creative wisdom and goodness.

So uncontrollable is the desire for companion-

ship, that, although we know what a mixture of fortune and destiny is involved in such a partnership, solitary confinement is reckoned the severest punishment of prison discipline. Monks who have sought solitude have thought to exchange the fellowship of men for a closer fellowship with the Heavenly Father. For one to wish to be free from all the heritage that comes from human relationship is to wish he had not been born. Even the most daring fiction has never tried to portray such an existence. When Robinson Crusoe is cast upon a desert island he counts it among the mercies for which he should be thankful that the same ship that brought him to his miserable destination and foundered on the beach brought in it also many products of other hands than his, which he was able to secure and which were very useful to him. He said in particular: "What should I have done without a gun, without ammunition, without any tools to make anything, or to work with, without clothes, bedding, a tent, or any manner of covering." Further than this he brought with him an understanding gained from association with others by which he reflected he would be able to provide other tools when those he had were gone. He thought his lot far from a hopeless one, especially as he had hope still of deliverance from his island exile.

Perhaps next to self preservation, companionship is the most deeply rooted instinct of animal life. The few persons who have been lost in childhood and found in advanced age after having lived many years entirely separated from human society have

consorted with wild beasts and adapted themselves as far as possible to their ways and modes of living. From such comradeship, enforced by the necessities of nature, down through all grades of relationship and dependence to such as have only a fanciful value, men seek to gratify their social instinct. There are few who do not take pleasure in tracing back their lineage to some illustrious name, even when no good comes from it beyond the gratification of a pleasing fancy.

It would be futile to attempt to enumerate even the most important of the benefits that depend upon the same conditions of unity as those that bring a train of suffering on all the associated parts from the wrongs done by any one part. All the advantages of civilization come to us because of those very conditions that are essential to the unity of the race.

As Bishop Butler has remarked, the course of nature had so many evidences of a compassionate design,—medicine supplied for disease, help awaiting the day of trouble, the fortunate standing ready to aid the unfortunate, knowledge waiting on ignorance, the well caring for the sick, the strong carrying the weak, the righteous seeking to save the sinful from their sins, that the thought is forced upon the mind of the least considerate that the author of this course of nature may be looking with compassion on his suffering, sinful creatures.

III. This word compassion, while it does not mean forgiveness, does mean atonement, suffering together with. And what an atonement it is! The

Creator suffering for the sins of his creatures. This brings us to the Third Essential of Complete Forgiveness. Suppose we turn aside a moment, now, from the contemplation of human relationships and companionship with nature, and look up to see the relationship this implies between us and our Maker. We behold the Creator of the Universe suffering for every sin we commit, for every mistake we make, for every sorrow we bear, the Son of God bearing for us all the penalties due to our transgressions, and the Father, Son and Spirit ever yearning to manifest such a living unity with us. Is it not possible that our hearts will be affected to repentance by the sight of such an innocent one suffering for the wrongs which we have done, and be changed in our entire attitude toward the righteousness of God? If then the Father also offers to forgive us our sins for the sake of his Son, and if he is able and willing to satisfy all the innocent who have suffered from our wrong doing, our own change from the love of sin to the love of holiness will add the last link in the three-fold requirement for a true, just and complete forgiveness. Such forgiveness bears the seal of the supernatural.

CHAPTER VII

CLAIMS FOR THE SUPERNATURAL SUBJECT TO TESTS

IT was said in the second chapter that an idea might arise in the mind transcending experience and yet be properly subject to the test of experience. An abstract notion like hardness and notions in general which are represented by common nouns, as man, temple, bird, are such ideas. No one of the objects represents the idea completely and yet the idea must come within the range of a practical experience of the individuals of the class. Experience is a standard for the judgment. But ideas of perfection in any object or course of conduct have no such standards, for our senses and powers of observation and inference, never reach perfection. The idea is itself the standard or pattern, and this is the test of perfection for experience. The idea of the circle or the square is the test of perfection for the figure drawn. There are other ideas in whose perfection we may believe, although we may not have reached them, even in thought, more than approximately. For example it is required that courts shall be guided by the law in giving their judgments, and legislatures should be guided by the principles of justice in making laws. The idea of justice is the ultimate standard both for the legislature and for courts. No one has ever arrived at a perfect con-

ception of justice from the tests that have been made, but we may correct false notions, and develop an approximately correct conception for practical purposes. The idea is higher than the individual experience. But the human idea must be subjected to experience repeatedly, or both the legislature and the courts will go wrong.

With our willingness to subject all other knowledge to earthly tests it may be fairly asked if our ideas of the spiritual life, to the conception of which progress on the earth has led, may also be submitted to earthly tests. The tests must fairly meet two questions, First, is there an idea of a spiritual life so different from the nature which preceded it on earth as to require to be called supernatural with reference to that nature? Secondly, has such an order of spiritual beings begun to be on the earth?

For the purpose of this chapter the word nature, unless limited, or meaning character, may be understood to include all that is included under purely material, vegetable, animal and strictly human characteristics. The first question, then, is, have we an idea of a spiritual life that is supernatural with reference to these? While the answer is subject to an earthly test, this is not of necessity a test of the perfection of the idea. Mathematical ideas may be tested by imperfect illustrations, but if they are found to be clear they will be absolute and perfect, at least as perfect as any conception we ever have. Such are the developed ideas of number and of geometrical figures. These ideas are so perfect that we do not conceive it possible for them to be varied. But the

principles of justice, while used as patterns for laws and capable of being tested by them, do not come into conscious perfection in the human mind. Therefore, although we do not find a perfect conception of a perfect spiritual life, subject to earthly tests, it may be possible to find a conception with approximations to perfection, similar to such ideas as that of justice on which the whole world has been satisfied to base its most important actions and decisions. The earth is still performing motherly functions, and the spiritual idea as well as the spiritual life is yet to be developed by earthly experience into fuller consciousness.

We found in the discussion of Christian consciousness a confident expectation of immortality. The idea is found among all peoples who have any considerable power of abstraction, perhaps in a low form even among the lowest. It becomes more and more purified from sordid considerations as we rise in the scale of intelligence, and when Socrates tells his friends they may bury him where they please, if they can catch him when he expires perhaps his mind grasps something of the supernatural. He thinks of himself as a soul possessed of thoughts and feelings not gathered from the earth, and yet only developed by contact with the things of the earth. It therefore depends upon the body only for its development, not for its being. It can continue to exist without the body. To this conception of the continued existence of the soul after death there is to be added the idea of a renovated nature, the foundation of which is not intelligence but love, love first

to God and then love to our fellow-men. This form of the idea was clearly brought out by Christ when asked by the scribe to name the first commandment of the law. The answer has many points of deep interest to us. In the first place the Jews had interpreted the law as ceremonial and as simply a guide to behavior. Christ interprets it as spiritual. It is a test of character. Secondly the command required, first of all, a right spiritual attitude toward the one God, and this consisted of loving him with all the heart, soul, mind and strength. The whole being should be consecrated to the love of God. In the third place, although the question had been fully answered, Christ would not leave it there, but required an earthly test, love to one's neighbor. Love to God could not stand alone in the human soul. Fourthly he made neighborliness spiritual, not formal. It is the man who embraces the opportunity to help a needy fellow man, whether of the same tribe and country or not, who could claim the neighborly relationship. Fifthly, when the scribe recognized the truth of the penetrating answer, when he showed his appreciation of the spiritual element of the law, and the idea broke upon his mind, Christ said, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. To have so much of a spiritual insight, and to proclaim it in the presence of those who had come with him to scoff, was evidence of being near the spiritual kingdom. It is no wonder that after this bewildering revelation and its astonishing effect on the lawyer representative of the confederate party, no man dared ask any more questions.

Perhaps nowhere is the spiritual character of the Christian life set forth more strikingly than in the second great commandment. Much has been said and written on the Golden Rule. Much pains have been taken to show the superiority of its affirmative requirements over the prohibitive form given by Confucius. Perhaps there is nothing strained in this comparison. But at best it is taken only as a rule, and whether inhibitive or mandatory in form its profound value lies not in what it directs to do or not to do, but in the spirit which is implied. Is it a spirit of equal justice or a spirit of adequate love? Christ gives it in this second commandment as the spirit of adequate love. If a man has this all the rest will follow, as a stream flows from its fountain. Did such love possess the heart there were no need of the Golden Rule. We never stop to ask if we love ourselves well enough to do this or that for our happiness, why should there be such a question about our neighbor, but that love is deficient? Much has been written in recent years on the subject of egoism and altruism. The love required would abolish the distinction made. But whence comes this love to God and man? A sense of justice grows, but to make God and man one with ourselves in love is not of earth. Buddhism may look to a kind of unity by negations, but perfect love is the sum of all righteous activities of the most profoundly developed life, and it has little warrant in thought and no warrant in hope aside from the immortality brought to light in the revelation of Christ.

Our earthly life furnishes sufficient material for

the development and growth of the spiritual life, and we may look to experience for a test of its reality. This test now must be a test of a life developed by the exercise of love to God and man. In considering Christian consciousness we found that a belief in the supernatural birth and resurrection of Christ furnished an object of love and service which meets this requirement to its fullest extent. In the love and service of Christ as God and man we fulfill in our measure both the first and the second commandment. But in his teaching Christ made it clear beyond a doubt that service to him on earth is to be found in fulfilling the mission he gave to his people to serve mankind. This makes the test a very practical one, and one that, it seems, ought to be easily recognized. But a test requires proper conditions to make it satisfactory, and there are so many elements that easily combine with the manifestations of a spiritual life, that it is difficult for the observer to distinguish the true from the seeming.

But there is a recognition among men of the behavior due from a spiritual life. With all his faults, wherever the truths of the gospel are known, the world has not been slow to recognize some conduct as becoming a Christian and some as unchristian. The unanimity of opinion is too great to allow the supposition that the difference depends altogether on the point of view of the observer, and not at all on the thing itself. Like other tests the observer must have a developed power of observation for the thing he is trying to determine, but the civilized world has not agreed on the recognition of a certain thing

as Christianity when there is nothing to it. It is true that one cannot read what is going on in the mind of his companion, much less the motives that sway his heart, except from his conduct which may be misleading, but it cannot be that Francis Xavier, Père Marquette, William Carey, David Livingston, and multitudes of other men in the humbler walks of life in every century of the Christian era, could we search them out, would seem to us to have lived hollow lives. The idea of the spiritual life which we have found to exist has its counterpart in the actual spiritual life of men.

We do not read into the words of Christ what is not there, we do not read into the thoughts of the noblest and most aspiring men who have ever lived what is not there, when we see unfolding signs of a spiritual life that is not of earth, but which is from above. We simply open our eyes to all that is passing before them. When Daniel prayed in his room his windows were open toward Jerusalem, not for earthly vision, but because his heavenly sight would be helped by the earthly. It reminded him of all his God had done for his people, and he prayed for future help with his mind filled with the thoughts thus stirred in memory. They came to him afresh whenever he looked toward Jerusalem, and his spiritual eyes were open to catch the more easily the vision of a glory yet to be. The earthly life furnishes the nourishment needed to develop both the spiritual idea, and the spiritual life; but this would only be possible to a being in whom the germs of that life had first been planted.

We found also in Christian consciousness a sense of the forgiveness of sins. This is not essential to the idea of a spiritual life, but it is essential to the beginning of a spiritual life in man. In the material world we read the law of equality between action and reaction. We are likely to carry this law through all the orders of nature which we have found, and think that nature, of whatever kind, will thus take care of all her so-called faults. But when life sets free the forces that cause the seed to grow, what is the reaction of the growing seed upon the developing life? The life activity is not checked, but it expands and grows with the growing tree. When the will changes the equilibrium of the forces of the nervous system, and causes the arm to rise, what is the reaction upon the will? It is strengthened by every successful effort, and weakened when there is no result. When a moral act is performed the moral character is strengthened, for good or for evil, according to the act. Thus reaction in the higher forms or realms of nature tend to increase instead of exhausting power. There may be transformation of the forms of force in the lower nature at the same time, but, in the higher realm, activity increases the power to act.

But there is also another result coming back upon the actor. The consequences that fall upon other things come back upon the actor for good or evil, and the expectation of this constitutes the motive for action. Perhaps reaction of the first kind may furnish a law as constant as the law of reaction in matter, but it is not the same law. With the second

form of reaction there seem many contingencies beyond the power of man to calculate as results with certainty. Men in business take their chances. The greatest of generals runs his risks. The farmer plows and sows but cannot forecast the harvest. We do not know whether the seed we sow will grow or not, and we are ever working on probabilities. In the realm of the moral world nature is prolific of contingencies, and reveals no hope of the future but a mixed state with mixed reactions of moral character with the contingent reactions quite unknown. Mankind thus looks forward to the future after death as a leap in the dark. But the Christian believes that a spiritual life of love, coming from a higher source, may replace the natural reactions together with the forgiveness of sins that are past, and that the contingent reactions may be confidently trusted to the love of God. That this state of the heart is a reality in the world is attested by many witnesses.

There are freaks in the world. There are freaks in the vegetable world, freaks of animal growth, freaks of mental and moral growth. Is the spiritual man a freak among men? The boy who tries to live a spiritual life among a set of vicious boys seems to them a freak. Is he? The entire class of spiritually minded men who look for a better country, even a heavenly, appear to be considered by some men of scientific attainments as but freaks, men with a part of their natures abnormally developed, or with some part wanting. From the materialistic point of view I do not know how it could be otherwise. The

Christian does not seem to fit in with the orderly course of nature. Her arrangements do not seem to have been made for him. What he calls duty and success and failure are not subject to the same standards of judgment as those adopted by large masses of men, and to them they have the characteristic marks of freaks. The world in which they live is an orderly arrangement, and our test must answer the question whether the class of spiritually minded men—for we must certainly recognize such a class, whatever their spirituality may mean—are really freaks in nature, or whether they constitute a supernatural order above the order of mere intelligence.

In the class is one, at least, so far above nature that he has been the center of the world's thoughts as no other man has been, his words have had a controlling influence which no other words have had, and his life was so spotless and forceful that he stands above all possible estimate of historian or philosopher. Yet he was so perfect and harmonious in the development of all his powers, his mental, moral, and his spiritual attitudes, that no one ventures to call him a freak of nature. He understood and revealed the mysterious, but he was not mystical. He saw into the heart of things that were about him, whether the heart of man or the inner constitution and purpose of lower nature. He did not carry that far-away look of the Wizard of Lochiel's Warning when he explained

“ 'Tis the sunset of life gives me mystical lore,
And coming events cast their shadows before.”

He was a prophet but he did not mutter as did the priestesses of other nations. He told of the kingdom of heaven but he taught that it was at hand. He always taught his disciples to look for the highest things in things that were present, even saying "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." He spent his life in doing good as no other life has been spent. His teaching was spiritual beyond the deepest penetration of any other philosophy. Purity and innocence are not the words with which to characterize him, for his sinlessness rose to the height of holiness. In the case of all the rest of the race the fortunes of one man are so linked with those of others that every one is involved in some way with the good and evil deeds of a whole community. Every one feels a responsibility for the prevention of crime, not only because he suffers from its evils, but he guiltily shares temporary benefit from its iniquitous gains. It is impossible to draw a line and say where one's responsibility for evil ends when dealing with avaricious and unscrupulous men. Everything we buy or sell is tainted. The responsibility is divided. But Jesus, man though he was, was never compromised by his associations. We never find him in such partnership that he shares a guilt with others. We never find him using falsehood or deceit, or following crooked ways to escape from a situation, as did Abraham, Rahab, David, and perhaps we might say every son of Adam, boy or man, who has come to years of responsibility. He was faithful unto death. He was from heaven but he was sent into the world, born of a woman and added to the nature

that had gone before as a fact for all the future.

Here we have a beginning, at least, which answers all the purposes of our test. It was his purpose in coming into the world to redeem sinful men and renew their sinful natures, giving them power to conform to his spiritual nature, and to become sons of God. Can the test be so applied as to make it seem reasonable to say there is an order of spiritual beings on this earth, superior in some essential thing to anything which nature has produced, or apparently can produce, outside the descent of this divinely regenerated line?

Here the imperfect conditions of the test must be accepted as explaining some of the imperfections of the results. The test is not only under conditions of a weak will, unable to resist strong temptation, but under conditions of ignorance, and imperfect moral vision. It is not a question whether every renewed man, or every man who professes to have been renewed, is strong enough to stand upright under all circumstances. Man is still under earthly as well as heavenly care and on the earth's nourishment the spiritual life is to be developed. The earth places poisons and sickening draughts within reach of her children, as well as food. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, said the Master. They must be developed and strengthened in every part of their nature by trial, and the conditions of the earthly life are adapted to meet this need. The question is rather whether the Christian has spiritual aspirations which reveal in some degree his real love for his God and his fellow men;

whether spiritual thoughts possess his mind, and spiritual associations attract his soul; whether he is preparing to fit in with perfect spiritual surroundings. Harsh as the world is in its judgments, the number of men is very small in any Christian community who would not say they have known some persons worthy to be numbered in the spiritual order.

Christians have vied with one another to present the glory and the loveliness of their Head in story and in song, but those who strike the highest notes know best of all how much they fall below the glory as it is. The best is but a faint echo of the world-creating Word. Professor Jowett in speaking of Socrates realizes the wonderful character of the dialogues written out by Plato, the greatness of the man who could pen them, but he says that could we see and hear the master himself, as he was, instead of listening to his reported words, we should be made to know and feel that the master surpassed the pupil as much as real conversations surpass reports of them. The woman of Samaria told a wonderful story to her countrymen, and they believed and went to see. But when they saw they said, Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have seen him ourselves, and know that this is the Christ the Savior of the world. The Christian thinks not to emulate but to imitate the Master, as a child its parent. It should not be thought so strange if the first attempts are full of faults. Who would say that no progress is made in individual lives, or that the leavening influence of Christianity on the world has been less marked than that of science or art? Consider the

patience that watched the earth forming out of chaos, the long preparation for the coming of vegetable life, then animal life, then man. It will take time for the new order of spiritual beings to evolve a harmonious character under earthly conditions, but the history of nature is prophetic of a future for a spiritual life on earth which can be realized only when the earth has fulfilled all its mission in promoting a true spiritual evolution.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SUPERNATURAL BIRTH OF JESUS NOT OUT OF HARMONY WITH NATURE

ONE should not enter upon this theme with the triumphant feelings of a man who knows that he is master of his subject, nor with the confidence of a disciple who rests on his teacher's *ipse dixit*. It is taken up here, not to treat of it as a revealed fact, but to consider whether the rational objections raised against the Bible story are entitled to the overwhelming weight which is sometimes given them. The obscurity which rests on all connecting facts might seem at first to remove the subject from rational discussion. But some things may, perhaps, be said to remove an acknowledged prejudice which exists against accepting the story on any testimony. It is quite worth while to examine and see if this prejudice has a good foundation.

It is not a little curious to note how the human mind, especially as manifest in philosophy and science, has concerned itself more with seeking the beginnings of things than the ends to be gained. It seeks for causes rather than results. The thing of importance to man is to know what results will come from present conditions and present conduct. But how little of scientific thought is given to a development of the probabilities of the future and the conditions that are likely to grow out of the present! As

an isolated fact, a fact by itself, it is of much more consequence to the world to know what the supply of fuel is to be in the future, than to know that the world was once a molten mass. It is of more consequence to me to know what may be learned about the immortality of the soul, than to know whether some anthropoid ape was in the line of my ancestors or not. It is of greater importance to know the present as a cause of the future than as an effect of the past. Let the pure scientist take the most extreme position we can imagine and say, "Nothing can happen in the future that has not happened in the past, therefore we only need to know the past to know all. In the first place this is pure assumption, carrying reason beyond the boundaries of knowledge; and in the second place we can know very little of the past, and while weak on this side of possible knowledge we neglect some of the most important sources of knowledge, for instance, the purpose of the present.

This is said not to minify the value of philosophic and scientific inquiry, for it is fully realized that but for the very work men of scientific attainments are doing there could be no judging of the future by the past, and therefore no progress of the race. But the chain of cause and effect, as we call it, does not end where they leave it. Every fact is as much connected with a future as with a past, and by the same tie, but philosophy and science look on but one side of the truth. Philosophy has been defined as a knowledge of effects by their causes. But in fact it begins with what is a cause and only treats of it as

an effect, whereas to know it thoroughly it must be known both as an effect and a cause. If any new and valuable results are obtained by these studies they are only by-products, not purposed gains. The charge is not new, but it seems fitting to call attention to it here, that we may see how inadequate philosophy and science are as they are used, to open to us the whole meaning of life. We may now understand how it is that the philosophic mind is so likely to be content to move in a small circle of even the facts that may be gathered from experience, and it may be confidently affirmed that it is no more important or essential to the perfection of knowledge to find every link in the development of the past than to forecast the future as far as possible. Perhaps all this would come under a proper science if enlarged to its possible limits, but its sphere at present is mainly confined to seeking after causes.

It is generally agreed among men engaged in scientific investigations that no link has been found connecting mineral matter with sentient being, and that several such links are wanting to make a scientific understanding of natural development complete. But not all scientific writers accept this position. Thomas Davidson says, "We must regard the very lowest forms of matter as, to a certain extent, alive and sentient, unless we are to attribute the introduction of life to a miracle, and acknowledge the bankruptcy of science." But in all seriousness it may be asked, "Is not science bound to come to bankruptcy any way, if it is held to answer for beginnings? Dr. Davidson says that one of the ele-

ments of all we know of existence must be desire, and that desire necessarily implies an object desired, which he calls substantial feeling. Thus the elements of existence are to him substantial feelings and desires. In this arrangement there is shown an adaptation of these elements to one another, and when we get back to them, there is an insistent demand to know whence this adaptation, and hence whence these elements so adapted. How much worse is it for science to be called bankrupt in respect to several beginnings than to be allowed to go on without protest to elemental feelings and desires capable of evolving into suns and systems, into thought and will, into philosophy and science, into art and religion, into myriads upon myriads of forms that affect the senses, and then fail to account for the feelings and desires and their adaptations, bankrupt at last? If one seeks to avoid this question by asking how much better off a person is who attributes beginnings to a personal Deity, the answer may be made that the rational finite mind does not claim to be able to find out the Omnipotent to perfection. It is willing to confess to bankruptcy in this, and yet it does not believe that this is a deficiency which nullifies the value of its affirmations in matters which it is adapted to understand. Faith in our senses needs no apology, nor should reason seek excuse when it comes to the limit of its sphere of activity. Why should it be thought necessary for human science, with powers of observation limited in every direction, confined to so small a corner of the universe, and restricted by physical conditions, to answer all the

questions which a mind with powers transcending its physical setting can ask about time and eternity and the infinite questions which we can but ask though we cannot answer them?

This earth which we inhabit is but a grain of sand, as it were, in the physical universe. It seems to have been fitted as the home of man. He has been nestled in this little nook, fed and nourished by what the earth provides, given breath and provided with water and heat which are held in for him by the surrounding atmosphere and its vapors, and clothed in beauty and comfort from the materials gathered from the earth. He may shut his eyes to the light of day, and dream that he owes everything to his nesting place. But the earth could not keep him alive, it has been calculated, from one new moon to another, but for the influence that comes from surrounding worlds. Our light and heat are but a waste product from the sun, and the fitting amount is determined by the path we tread in our journey around this orb. But this path is kept constant by the attractions that come from members of our solar system. The solar system has been kept constant during countless millenniums by the influence lent it from worlds extending in every direction to an incalculable distance. Thus man depends on the influence of the assembled universe of stars for the continuance of his well-being; on what for his being?

Perhaps we have not yet reached the limit of our indebtedness to surrounding worlds. The telescope seems, at last, to have reached the limit of the starry spheres, in some directions, and to have pierced

to space beyond. It is not a wild conjecture to suppose that at a distance from this edge of our universe, so great that attraction upon the nearest and the most remote of the members of our universe would be comparatively the same, and no force coming from without would disturb the relations of our stars to one another, there may lie another universe, and that we may multiply this till the mind staggers under the contemplation. Who can tell what influences may be centered on our universe from without if we could not only say, "Other worlds than ours" but "other universes than ours?" And all this perhaps, for man!

Can we go out at night and look at the starry vault, and think of all this our dependence, and the law according to which these orbs interact upon one another in mutual harmony, and for our good, and then think that only in this little nest of ours is there a being capable of thought and feeling, and a being possessed of a spiritual life? Or can we think that this vast universe is throbbing with physical forces for the physical protection and development of man, and yet that nowhere else in space is there a being to lend an influence for the perfection of his spiritual nature, a nature to which all other natures we know here are but stepping stones? Or can it be that our glances upward and around upon the vast panorama where we find such a quickening for the mind and such a stimulus to our hopes of a larger and freer life, are but stolen glances, and that we are to be driven back into ourselves, and told to be content with the station in which we were born? This

would indeed be shutting us up in a very narrow and oppressive prison-house, enslaving our higher natures under our appetites and passions, and limiting them to a consideration of the necessities of egoistic and selfish surroundings, instead of making them masters according to the law of development we have elsewhere found to prevail. It cannot be that we can look up, but that there is no one who can look down. It cannot be that the universe blindly cares for the well-being of our physical natures, and that no one cares for the soul. The intelligence of the whole race rebels at the thought. Shall we close our eyes and shut our hearts to all this appeal of a larger nature that takes in not only all the realms of space but the realm of a spiritual life as well?

But if spiritual harmony is possible and ever to be realized, there is an imperative demand for help from on high. How help shall come is beyond the wisdom of man to say. But the need of influences different from those of earth is beyond dispute.

A brave band of gunners stand upon the heights resisting charge after charge till the ranks on either side become but skeletons of what they were, but at length the enemy show signs of giving away and the commander at the guns orders one more volley; the next moment the soul of that commander, and the souls of many of the enemy, go together to their final account. It was a brave stand taken on the heights that day, and the place where the brave and patriotic commander stood is marked with a stone, and his name goes down in history, among friends and foes, as the name of one of the world's heroes.

But what a story does it tell for the race? How shocking it is to be only able to say of the terrible carnage of war, "This is not the worst of it. It is better so than that the hordes of smaller and meaner vices should breed, and swarm, and spread, and fill the earth with a moral miasm in every nook and corner of civil, social and commercial life, because there is no one with virtue and courage to stand against them." If in the crises of the earth's development vegetable life and animal life have been successively prepared for and in due time added to nature, shall we not now expect that from some source a new spiritual life will be added for man?

The Christian believes there is a spiritual world that is not of earth. He believes that when the will yields complete and final submission to the Master, a new spiritual life is born within, and there is the beginning of a new creature. The control which one person may have over another when the will is completely submissive is one of the common observations of the times. If there is a spiritual world around us it is not unnatural to look for a spiritual life within.

We may go further than this. Whatever may be thought of the ancient phenomena known by Plato and the Evangelists as demoniacal possessions it can scarcely be doubted that by hypnotism, and perhaps other means of whose secret processes we are ignorant, the will of one person may control the physical energies of another whose will has been surrendered, and science has not yet been able to set a limit to the forms in which this power may be exercised. Who

can set a limit to what the Creator may effect, all in accordance with the laws of the nature that we know, by the use of such a power? The supernatural will be fitted to the natural. There is a new power but old material. And who shall say "The earth for earthly beings only?" During his life Jesus adapted himself to the laws of the materials with which he had to do in working his miracles, using water to make wine, touching the eyes of the blind, using real fish and bread to feed the multitudes, and taking the ruler's daughter by the hand as he said "Arise."

When the angel came to Mary announcing that the prophecy of Isaiah, "A virgin shall bear a son," was to be fulfilled through her, she answered "Be it unto me according to thy word." Considering the situation in which she was placed these were, perhaps, the most wonderful words that ever fell from the lips of a woman. Though uttered under the stress of the deepest perplexity and troubled embarrassment, they have a simplicity and directness that are not surpassed in the use of language. There is a self-renunciation which would seem to mean a sacrifice, considered the greatest a woman can be asked to make. There was a faith as clear as the vision of the angel in whose presence she made her resolve and reply. No just conception of the interview can be had without the conviction that the soul of Mary was illumined by a presence not of earth. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord," was the signal of the complete surrender of herself to the service of her God. If the incarnation took place

precisely as set forth by the physician-evangelist it is not a miracle to stagger belief, but to challenge wonder at the infinite condescension of the Son of God. We might imagine that if he were to come at all he would have come with the display and power belonging to him in his heavenly abode; but God did not repent him of the plan on which he had created the earth, and in the evolution of that plan all of earth's resources—her motherhood to its fullest extent—were to be used, even in this new and astonishing revelation of his purpose. We only need to rise to such an intellectual height as to be able to get a just perspective of all that has been done for the race, and the infinite needs of man's sinful nature to realize that the coming of the Son of God, and the way he came, are not so incredible as they have been sometimes supposed to be but entirely in harmony with the broader nature of which we have tried to gain a view. In full accord with this nature the new spiritual life came with one born of a woman, who increased in wisdom and in stature, fed and nourished according to earthly laws like other earth-born sons of men.

CHAPTER IX

SUPERNATURAL DEEDS NATURAL IN THE LIFE OF JESUS

IN considering the subject of miracles in general it is of vital importance to judge the opinions of men in regard to supernatural phenomena as related to their conception of supernatural beings. We do not need to consider the origin of the conception here as it has been considered elsewhere. Those who reject the idea of supernatural beings must deny supernatural phenomena, in order to be consistent. Those who believe in many supernatural beings more or less independent of one another in purpose and in the exercise of power, may consistently believe in supernatural events of varied and conflicting character. Those who believe in a Supreme Being of whom they conceive as the creator and upholder and ruler of all things, must believe in the possibility, if not the probability, of his manifesting himself in a supernatural way. If he could manifest himself in creation he could manifest himself in control. To them supernatural phenomena should be no surprise. They are in the best possible position to weigh evidence for and against any claims of supernatural manifestation without prejudice. But in every case supernatural phenomena must harmonize with conceptions of supernatural beings. Conscious of personality and will ourselves we naturally have con-

ceptions of other beings higher than physical nature, though we may believe or disbelieve in them. Those who believe in a creator as exercising absolute sovereignty in all things, and, as working out a plan which they think they can see, at least in part, may decline to accept any event as supernatural that is not in harmony with his character and with this plan; it must be a manifestation of the being in whom they believe. Those who believe there are other supernatural beings whom the sovereign sends or permits to manifest a limited power over nature, may consistently believe in demoniacal possessions and other influences of evil spirits. Those who stand in doubt in regard to the spheres of all supernatural beings but the sovereign One may refuse to consider, without denying, the claims of any events which they cannot reconcile with their conceptions of the one supernatural power, in whom they do trust. There is perhaps no greater reason for our expecting to solve all supernatural than all natural problems. But the clearer our conceptions of the one Supreme Being and the nearer we get to him in spirit and in purpose the less will be our surprise at any event that clearly manifests his will and purpose. The supernatural seems more and more to belong to that nature of which we ourselves are a part the more we consider it and him, and the better we understand both.

Several important conclusions follow from the above principles. First, the Christian needs only concern himself with the claims of those events which pertain to the establishment and progress of

Christianity. He is not bound to defend or denounce other claims. Moses did not argue against the Egyptian magicians. Jesus did not deny the virtue of the troubled water in the pool of Bethesda or its power to heal the impotent man if he could reach it in time. Paul could not be charged as a blasphemer of the goddess Diana even by his enemies. How easily could Jesus have helped the object of his compassion to Bethesda's pool and proved to him by trial the unsoundness of his superstitious belief in its healing virtue, and then set off his own power in contrast by speaking the healing word. These all regarded it as sufficient if they enforced their claims by the use of a power that revealed their own divine mission and purpose.

Secondly, the Christian is not so much concerned to show the supernatural character of the events of the gospel narratives as their naturalness, considered as the works of him whose they were. The Doer and the deeds must be in harmony. The deeds must be natural for one who was what Jesus claimed to be and natural for him alone. If done by others it must be in his name. They would be wonderful works indeed, past human belief if considered simply as the results of lower powers, but natural for the supreme power and benevolent character of Jesus. They were not given to astonish men but to win them by revealing the character of him by whose power they were wrought. It seems both unfortunate and unjust that the Greek words used in the gospels to designate the works of Christ were often translated wonders and miracles. The different

Greek words used represent Christ's works from three different points of view and mean signs or tokens, powers, or simply works. The Greek word which means wonderful things is used but three times in the gospels, and never in referring to the works of Christ. It is used once in Matthew and once in Mark where Christ speaks of the works of false prophets, and once in John where he says to the nobleman that he will not believe except he see signs and wonders. But the gospel writers never use a word to characterize his works that implies wonder or astonishment, such as the word miracle makes emphatic. When the words meaning signs and powers are translated miracles or wonders it turns the thought away from the characteristic feature to which it was the design to call the attention and leads to a false interpretation of the works themselves. To judge fairly of the works of Christ as reported we must eliminate entirely from our minds the idea of the wonderful, the marvelous. Without doubt they did strike the mass of beholders with wonder, but this is viewing them from afar. The gospel narrative would bring us nearer and present them in the clearer light of their purpose. If we do not make them seem natural to us under the circumstances we fail to justify our belief in them, for surely no unbelief can be more unreasonable than to think the Creator might act in an unnatural way or contrary to himself.

Thirdly, we must not only make Christ's work harmonize with our belief in him, but we must make it harmonize with what we call nature in a lower

sense or we fail to give him the consistency which belongs to him as Creator. He is to be considered not only as a worker for three short years on this earth, but as the Maker of the earth and all of nature as well as of heavenly things. We cannot exclude the order of nature from the picture and do the Creator justice. There is no inconsistency in supposing the Creator may add to his works and supplement his physical nature by the exercise of a higher nature, but so far as he comes in contact with it he must recognize all its forces to be consistent with himself. This he does when he uses them though he does it by a power above them. There is no other view of this world so ennobling as to see in it the concrete of the thought of the Creator, and no other has put this view in language so true, so beautiful and so inspiring as Christ himself. From the lily, the sparrow, the seed corn, the harvest, the vine, the temple, the mansion, the rock, the street, the field, and everything on which his eye rested he drew some spiritual truth for all. If the thoughts of men are wider than the sea then is the Creator's energy not bounded by what we see and feel and call nature. Present concrete nature is not only a promise of that which it may become but it illustrates the universal, the spiritual. The word and creation are a picture book for man in which the works illustrate the word. If some of the letters in the word are illuminated with a heavenly light some of the works are supernatural. The word is one and consistent, the work betrays the hand of one master. The divine purpose and the use of natural means

coalesce. If the Son of man turns water into wine it is done as a filial act of conformity to his mother's wish, and so far as we know it is the last of the kind he was ever asked by her to perform. The sick, the blind, the lame have restored to them the natural use of their powers. The hungry are fed with bread and fish. To the widowed mother he restores a son, to the ruler he gives back a daughter, for the sisters at Bethany he calls a brother from the grave. It was not for the body lying on the bier, it was not for the lifeless form from whose cheeks the bloom of coming maidenhood had just faded away, it was not for the unconscious clay that had lain in the grave four days, that Jesus showed his power. What the change means for them who can tell? But for the poor widow who had lost the natural support of her declining years, the father and mother of an only daughter who had left them at a tender age, and the sisters between whom and the brother he knew how many ties of affection and dependence existed full well, he had a compassion that called forth an expression of his power to help, even to the raising of the dead. All these works were signs of his character of compassion and mercy and exhibitions of his power to help in time of human need. It was natural for him to bring the dead to life that the son, the daughter, the brother might continue to fulfill their natural obligations to those who had need of such help. Jesus performed no such work for any one who could not render such service. It makes no difference whether we call such works signs or powers, but to call them won-

ders is to show our lack of appreciation of their real significance.

If it be objected to this position that the word in the Greek which is properly translated wonders is found eight times in the Acts and three times in the epistles to denote the works of the apostles, it may be answered it only makes the position the stronger when we come to look more deeply into the distinctions actually made. The word for wonders or miracles is never used except in connection with the word for signs, and appears to refer to the same class of deeds. When we recall the fact that the Hebrews had few adjectives in their language and used nouns instead, it may be doubted if the Jewish writers meant anything by the expression "signs and wonders" but what we would express by "wonderful signs," the word for wonders, like the common use of our adjective, expressing a characteristic of the word for signs. But however this may be Luke, who uses the word for wonders nine times in the Acts, eight times for the works of the apostles and once of the work of false prophets, does not use it once in his gospel. It is as though many works seemed wonderful when wrought by the hands of the apostles but not wonderful when wrought by Christ. He had such an exalted view of Christ that no work he might do seemed wonderful as the work of such a worker.

The works of Christ, when considered in a natural way, offer no more difficulty to the understanding than his words. He spoke as never man spoke, his enemies being judges. When Peter was astonished

at the draught of fishes he cried out in terror, but when the Lord said "Fear not," and turned his thoughts to the effect as a sign of what was to follow his own service, he left all and followed the Master. Fear and astonishment faded into love and worship. It is only when wonder dies that the understanding is quickened.

We may not be able to tell whence Christ's knowledge of men's thoughts and the secret powers of nature, or how, knowing them, he controlled them. Neither can we tell how our own minds can be affected by what our eyes see and our ears hear, nor why the movements of the body should follow the attitudes of the mind. There is mystery in all this. But as we accept the tuition of life without hesitation, with the same natural simplicity we should seek to understand the works and words of Christ.

When we bring to an understanding of Christ's works our natural powers quickened to a consciousness of spiritual truth, there is nothing in his life to make us wonder at the combined results of the natural and the supernatural. We may wonder at him but knowing him we do not wonder at his works. A new birth is not a new being. Even Christ did no work that compels us to assume a creative act such as we suppose brought the worlds into being. How water was changed into wine, how five loaves and two fishes grew to feed five thousand with twelve baskets remaining we cannot tell. But the added material, if such there was, could have come from the atmosphere or some other tangible source, and it may have been used by a transforming

and assimilating power that was supernatural and that would yet seem in the highest degree natural had we a deeper insight into the nature of the powers of Christ. It has been said that against no book of scripture have the shafts of infidelity and the sapping arts of anti-supernaturalism been more strenuously directed than against that of the prophet Jonah; and it might be added that for a class of minds no more effective weapon has been forged. As early as the time of Julian the apostate pagans made it the subject of banter and ridicule. Wit-ticism is no modern invention. The book has suffered as much from such exhibitions of wit, perhaps, as all the rest of scripture. This surely does not arise from the greater incredibility of the story, but it is simply because of what seems to the scoffers a vulnerable grotesqueness in two verses of the book alone. They are the seventeenth of the first chapter, and the tenth of the second. "Men pore over the fish and forget God." There are others of devout minds who would treat the story as an allegory. But Christ seems to regard it as history. He uses the history as allegory to set forth his resurrection and the principles that will rule on the judgment day.

A fanciful deliverance of the prophet from a fanciful danger invented to impress spiritual facts might fitly be used to represent a spiritual resurrection, but it seems a weak way to represent the resurrection of the body. It is using an indefinite, intangible, shadowy supposition to impress and make real what is already a sensible event. The other application is more difficult to explain from an allegorical

interpretation. Christ said "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and shall condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah." If Jonah and his preaching were but creatures of the imagination there is only a phantom for evidence and the trial can only be a farce; for as Whewell says in speaking of Inductive Philosophy, "From a painted hook we can only hang a painted chain." But it does not relieve the grotesqueness to treat the story as an allegory whose privilege it is to eliminate everything that can offend the sensibilities and present only the pleasing and attractive.

The book is the only evangelistic history of the Old Testament, and far beyond any other book as a whole it glows with the spirit of the gospels in its broad vision of grace and forgiveness for every repentant nation. To make the two verses referred to naturalistic we need only consider that it was no more unnatural to provide a fish to serve the divine purpose of rescuing the prophet from the sea than to provide a fish with a piece of money in its mouth for the temple tribute of the Master and Peter. Not all large trees grow on Lebanon. Individual anomalies of one kind and another are not uncommon in plants and animals. An animal sometimes grows abnormally large. A horse nineteen hands high and weighing nineteen hundred pounds was exhibited a few years ago, and perhaps no other has ever appeared in this country to be compared with it. We cannot say that the method of training, of reproof and of salvation for the prophet was unnatural to him

who was teaching the lessons of obedience, admonition, forbearance and forgiveness that glow on every page of the book in beautiful illustrations from actual life and real existence as in the gospel story.

This discussion may have seemed in the beginning to have assumed an indifference toward those who do not admit the existence of an intelligent creator. There is one further consideration to support the reasonableness of the supernatural that must appeal to all alike. It is the fact of the free will. No one can deny the existence of purpose and the adaptation of means to ends. Every one is conscious in himself of thinking for the future, and of planning combinations to secure certain ends, and of making contingent plans to meet contingent conditions. It matters not if you suppose the thought and purpose themselves are in some way determined by present physical conditions of the brain and its environment. The thought of a house is not a house, and we are all alike conscious of a power to determine whether or not a house shall be. The universe presents as clear and convincing evidences of design and adaptation as any product of human genius. Indeed the claim of the scientific skeptic should mean nothing but this, that the universe is established with such a balancing of its parts to meet all possible contingencies that there can never be need of care for the sparrow or supernatural interest in the rise and downfall of nations. If we grant that there is no need to excite such care or arouse such interest afresh it would be just as evident that such care and interest did exist at some time in the past when all the future

lay open before the eyes of the Creator and he determined that these things should be; and the care and interest have not died away. Place the beginning where you will there must have been a determining plan and purpose.

If man had an intelligent Creator, or if there was any intelligent determination of what he should be, whether immediate or mediate makes no difference, he must have had a sovereign, for there was nothing other than himself to determine him. As sovereign if he created man with free will he must have provided for the adaptation of creation to the contingencies of this free will. It is not necessary to consider here the divine foreknowledge; the provisions made, whenever and wherever planned must manifest themselves at the required time and place.

Not only are the works of the gospel narrative natural under the circumstances, on the supposition that Jesus was the Being he claimed to be, but it is absolutely necessary to presuppose such a being with the right to perform such deeds. A Sovereign Creator could not give free will to man, and at the same time abdicate all authority to control the exercise or the results of that free will in any way, without abdicating his sovereignty. It may be laid down as one of the primary principles of moral consciousness that there must be authority somewhere competent to prevent or correct wrong. Wrong suffered must be righted, wrong done must be punished, wrong possible must have a limit. The authority to control results is essential to the sovereign's gift of free will. Man's free will is not the absolute free will of the

Creator and could not be, without other infinite powers like omniscience and omnipotence. An ultimate power to control results must reside in the sovereign alike for the sovereignty, for the sake of the person sharing the power, and for the sake of those who might suffer injustice from its selfish or mistaken use. How long, O Lord, how long, is heard from the victim of avarice, hatred and ambition; how long, from the house of bondage; how long, from the burden-bearers whose burdens are doubled by the wrong-doing of the wicked; how long, from nations under the heel of oppression, unjustly humiliated and undone by powerful and unscrupulous conquerors; how long, from the tender hearted lover of his kind who sees wars still raging among the nations; murder, treachery, theft and vice of every kind still infecting the fountains of moral life; and selfishness still triumphant over the weak and helpless. It is the cry of universal humanity pleading for the supernatural to come to the relief of suffering, groaning nature. What is Hamlet but the echo of this universal cry fruitlessly beating against answering crags, and dying away hopeless at last in a starless night. And the wrong of it all hides under the shadow of the free will. He that gave free will alone can give relief.

CHAPTER X

THE SUPERNATURAL IN THE DEATH OF JESUS

BEHOLD there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory.

What visitors: the lawgiver of the ages, and the great prophet of all time, clad in glory. To what a Host: His face did shine as the sun and his raiment was white as the light, so as no fuller on earth can white them. On the mountain top away from the sight of men, with but three chosen witnesses beside. Such a scene the earth has had but once. Jehovah came to Abraham with "Get thee out of thy country." He came to Moses with "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet." He came to Isaiah with "Go tell." Jesus came to Saul with "Arise and go." He came to the Revelator with "Behold I come quickly." Today, whether day or night we cannot tell, today Moses and Elias come to Jesus. Men from the world beyond now come to Jesus in this world. They do not seem to come as messengers, but to talk with him as on equal terms, as if their theme was one of common interest. Moses from an unknown tomb, Elias last seen by men ascending in a chariot of fire;—these two appearing in glory, and the Son of God just from communion with his Father,—these thus talking together, would seem to be a scene for angels, not for men. But high and insufferably sublime as it was we are not at a

loss for the subject of their conversation. They spoke of the decease which Jesus should accomplish at Jerusalem. The theme was as great as the scene was glorious. To behold the sight in all its splendor should blind mortal eyes, to hear the theme discussed by those who knew should break the heart. What a contrast between the scene and the theme! But, no, not if rightly understood! All was fitting to the occasion. A bow of promise brighter than the pledge of no more flood rested one end upon the light-white crown and the other on the Easter-opened tomb, and it spanned the hill of Calvary. The death was the center around which all else moved. From the promise in Eden to the gathering of the hundred and forty-four thousand before the throne with white robes washed in the blood of the Lamb, the death is the key to unlock the meaning of all that is said and done. In the death we must find the unity of all that is encircled in that brighter bow of promise.

The most of what ought to be remembered here has been often and well told. How the penalty of sin could not be laid at will on an innocent third party, so that the mediator must be one with God to make the imposition just, and one with the sinner to make it real, how the penalty attached to sin was death, and how the Jewish Council for the Jewish people and Pilate for the Roman government united to inflict the death need not be here enlarged upon. It was the theme of Peter's pentecostal sermon, of Stephen's defense, and of Paul's preaching and writing. Above all Jesus himself showed the disciples after the resurrection how necessary it was for him to suffer

such things before he entered into his new glory. What we are to do here is to trace the natural events which led up to this supernatural result.

Great men stand above the reach of common minds. Aristotle was wise; Kant may have been both wise and true, but they did not speak to meaner intellects. Men of a different mould were needed to bring that which was true and useful to the common understanding. Jesus was profound beyond the reach of the most speculative imagination, but he needed no lower mind to set home his simple truth to the heart of the lowliest. The poor in intellect and in moral worth, as in purse, had the gospel preached to them. The Sphinx always turns his ear to hear whatever secret you may have to tell, but he never tells to you his secret in return. Ancient philosophies had their mysteries. But Jesus came to reveal the mysteries of his Father's kingdom and he told them in parables so simple that all might understand and turn their hearts to thoughts of higher things. He made his character, his doctrine and his authority so clear by his works and his words that none who had ears to hear, eyes to see and hearts to understand could have excuse for ignorance or for reading him wrong. He labored night and day and used the speech of the most common experience to make himself understood, and rested not when any call for a deed of mercy came to him. Yet against all this his death, supernaturally provided for, was the natural outgrowth of the situation. It was the placing of a holy life which demanded holiness before the most religiously trained

and enlightened tribunal the world has ever known, hardened in rebellion by tradition and heredity through two thousand years of the most marvelous history of which we have a record. There is warrant to believe that no other people would have pushed their opposition to such an extremity and with such hasty zeal—his work must have all been done within about three years—against the forms of law and in the absence of the smallest act which could be made the basis of a charge before the legal court. Men will commit excesses driven by insane frenzy; the Nazarenes might have lawlessly crowded him over the precipice to his death; the Jews might have madly stoned him as they tried several times to do. But for the most serious minded and august representatives of the nation to demand his death at the hands of the Roman governor who found no fault in him is the extreme expression of an unchangeable purpose. We have the authority of Christ himself for saying that Tyre and Sidon would have repented in sackcloth and ashes had they been witnesses of the works that had been done in Chorazin and Bethsaida, and even Sodom would have still stood if the exalted privilege bestowed upon Capernaum had been given to her. Nineveh did repent under the preaching of Jonah, but Judea and Galilee gave only deadly resistance to the warnings, the threatenings and the tender persuasions of Christ.

In the fulness of time. The time was come. Preparations had been completed. There was no doubt of the result. By their training and their opportunities the Hebrew nation and the Jewish peo-

ple were brought face to face with the truths of the kingdom of heaven so distinctly and with such a divine force as to draw out the opposition of human nature to heavenly holiness, and they were made to appear as they always are, irreconcilable forces. There could be but one natural end to such a contest. With all this in view it was determined that the Son of God should be born of woman, born under the law. He should come of that nation which had received the law by the disposition of angels and had not kept it. It is often said the world was ready to receive Christianity and publish it abroad, because of its conscious needs, its failures in morals and religion, its universally dominant government, and its scattered rays of hope appearing here and there. But the essential preparation was the preparation for the death. Without this there could be no remission of sins. A race was chosen capable of developing the profoundest religious convictions and it stands before the world today as the one race whose only history is a religious history. But all through their career they were prone to pervert the truth and pursue a false road, even under the guidance of the greatest light. And they pursued their purposes with a religious zeal born of a sense of the most sacred religious obligation. It was the deceptive nature of a human heart, desperately wicked. Human nature was tested as nowhere else and it rang true to the requirements of a fallen race.

It is not meant by this to make a comparison of the moral or intellectual character of the Israelites and other nations. Their condemnation of Jesus did

not show a specially mean spirit. It did not spring from low commonplace moral corruption. It was not from motives of common selfishness or personal aggrandizement. It was not base political intrigue. In large part it showed greatness of intellect, and high ambition, an intellect and ambition worthy of a great and good cause. But when representative men found themselves in the presence of the only sinless Being that ever walked with men, they demanded his death. Human nature was far more on trial in front of Pilate's judgment hall than was Jesus, and in the very moment of its supposed victory its case was lost. As if there might be hope of a natural regeneration for the divinely chosen and divinely favored people Jesus had labored lovingly and ceaselessly to draw them to himself, but at last seeing failure already at hand, and impressed with its magnitude as he gazed on the doomed temple and its city, he wept with no note of consolation in his cry.

The principle elements of spiritual truth in the midst of which the Hebrew character developed were monotheism, separateness, revealed law and a belief in a future national greatness that was indifferent to present consequences. These principles were ingrained in the mentality of the race by a tuition that knew no limit of patience or resources, through slavery, by judgments, by defeats, by victories, in the wilderness, in prosperity, by humiliation and through slavery again, till they were accepted as axiomatic. They were righteous principles but hard to learn. They must be practiced till they grew into habit. Paul could say "We know that an idol is nothing

in the world." But how long was Israel in learning this easy lesson. One of the important rules in forming a habit is to allow no exception in first efforts. The worship of the golden calf must be treated in a way to make an impression that would remain. The nations of Palestine must be exterminated to make separation possible, and later, families mixed with the foreigners must be broken up to make separation complete. If the king of Israel spares the king of Amalek in disobedience of the divine command he must lose his kingdom. The literature of the people must reflect the public policy. The Psalms which express their ideal religious life must plead for both the prosperity of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked. The enemies of the Psalmist, the representative of holiness, are the enemies of Jehovah. The intolerance of the Psalms is intolerance of evil. The sparing of Rahab and her house, the adoption of Ruth, approval of Solomon for not asking for the life of his enemies, and the admission of proselytes were too insignificant instances to establish the principle of mercy as also the distinction of the spirit of belief and formalism in the dealings of Jehovah, and when the Ninevites repented, even Jonah could not understand why they should be forgiven. The passage of the Red Sea, the manna of the wilderness, the conquest of Palestine, the triumphs of kings and prophets were evidences that Jehovah upholds those who trust and obey him, and such events accustomed the people to put implicit confidence in the good in store for them as a nation. They were as reckless of danger as the

Turks but not on the same grounds. The Turk is a consistent fatalist, the Hebrew believed in God as an omnipotent ally. The written and oral law was elaborated with the purpose of making formal application to every possible case of conduct. The closing years of the era before Christ were marked by the greatest extension in the details of the Jewish law evolved from the written law and tradition. The greatest of the professional expounders of the law taught till near the time of the Christian era, perhaps almost to the very year when the Nazarene child of twelve astonished the doctors with his questions and answers. The day will soon dawn when One who embodies the spirit by which true law is formulated will seek to substitute life for formal tradition and regeneration a law-ridden religion and its worshippers by the spirit of truth. Will the people receive him?

Their monotheism left no place for the claims of the Son of God. Their separation forbade to eat with publicans and sinners even of their own race. As the nation had been exclusive under the law the new kingdom for which they looked should be for Jews alone. They had learned by defeat in battle, by oppression in slavery, by pestilence and famine the need of searching out and punishing every infraction of the law. Their hopes for the future of their nation rested upon their fidelity in sustaining the law in its minutest details, and no consequences of its enforcement could be so hateful as those of its neglect.

The two great schools of law had disputed about

many things but they were agreed on these two propositions: First, it would have been better if man had never been created. Secondly, since he is in the world let him be careful of his actions. With a people who could look upon life judicially as such a prospect no risk of losing the hope of a Messiah who would restore their former greatness should be run whatever the cost of avoiding it. It was expedient that one man should die for the people. This was the atmosphere in which that madness matured which even the heathen reckoned as an infliction of the gods upon those whom they would destroy. Its fruits are seen in the devotion of the garrison of Masada and their families to extermination at the hands of executioners chosen by lot from among themselves, the last one to take his own life. The enemy found in the town but two women and five children who had hidden away. It is seen in the fateful course of the Jews in Jerusalem at its final capture. One cannot read these stories in Josephus without a shudder. The last argument decisive of the case of Jesus seems to have been based on the fear of losing national existence. It was this that nerved the council up to their final act. It was to the outward form of the promise that they clung to the last, not to the spirit that giveth life. In their estimation Jesus had been guilty of blasphemy, he had consorted with publicans and sinners, and he had violated the traditions of the Sabbath. All these things they could plead before the people and in self-justification. But these did not weigh most with them. His works were undeniable, but he could

not be the Messiah or prophet for whom they looked. He had refused the five thousand who wanted to compel him to be their king, and he gave no promise of national independence. When it was clearly put to him to answer if he favored giving tribute to Caesar he offered no objection to Roman jurisdiction. The skill with which the question was answered has been the admiration of Christians but it did not clear him of the charge of treason in the estimation of his questioners. When the great act of raising Lazarus turned the eyes of the people upon him, the council said "If we let him alone all men will believe on him and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." And the High Priest said, "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." Moral considerations did not weigh against this risk. Not one of the reasons that urged them on would have any influence with Pilate, and everything rested finally with him. When charges had to be finally invented bribery and falsehood did not stand in their way, and Pilate yielded at last to threats and over-persuasion. The first chapter of Romans and the comic poets make us sufficiently acquainted with the morality of Rome. Religion was divorced from morality and both went down in moral and religious darkness. The Jews arrayed religion against morality, and religion, such as it was, came off victor. But it led to the great tragedy of the cross.

Such were the fruits of Hebrew civilization not-

withstanding the light shed from the religious principles under which it was developed. The national life was planted in the soil of belief in one God, one chosen people, one revealed word, and a future supremacy of dominion. But the national character did not grow out of these. It did not find their higher universal element of love. Its roots were in the common soil of human nature. The bloom of the peach and the fragrance of the rose are not taken from the earth as bloom and fragrance. They are developed by a selecting and transforming power in the tree and shrub. The tree frog may hunt its prey among the branches of a tree unseen, because its color does not distinguish it from the bark on which it sits. It is said to be able to assume a variety of colors. But it does not draw its color from the bark. The Hebrew character was able to put on a religious garb, which was not spun and woven from the substance of revealed truth. The people of Judea like those of Samaria, feared Jehovah and served their own gods. There was no love of spiritual life in Jew or Gentile, and the forms of religion were sensual, not spiritual. They could not be otherwise till a power of selection and assimilation was born in the soul.

It is one of the paradoxes of the gospel narrative that after the trembling anxiety caused by Christ's warning to his disciples of his impending death; after the arrest, the trial, and the crucifixion; after the despairing days of the entombment; the rehearsal of the suffering by an apparent stranger did not renew the anguish of disappointment with which the

two disciples on their way to Emmaus had begun the conversation, nor elicit expressions of passionate sorrow, but only kindled a burning sense of love and happiness in their hearts, to which they confessed when their eyes were opened. It is one of the paradoxes of Christianity that those who were responsible for the death of the Master were immediately exhorted by the disciples to share in the inestimable benefits which it brought within reach. It is one of the paradoxes of the history of the church that the death is the theme of songs of praise and glory, not of dirge and lamentation. It would not seem so strange if the limitations of human nature should cause the Christian to forget the death in his rejoicing over the resurrection; but on the contrary the church has always refused to glory save in the cross. The explanation of the paradox is found only in the argument of the Risen One that it was necessary for him thus to suffer and enter into glory.

The supernatural training of the Jewish race called forth a nature by the development of which the great purposes of redemption were made possible. Through the death of Christ supernatural religion is united with a purified morality and man becomes a new creature. Who can look upon the history of nations and not recognize the fact that a supernatural intelligence and power have been shaping the destinies of men? It is the supernatural using the natural. But infinitely more important than the care or condemnation of the Alexanders and the Caesars were the events that opened the way to

the redemption of human nature. Jesus did not have more indulgence for the sinful woman than the scribes and Pharisees, but he had more compassion, and he could indulge his compassion because he knew that by his blood he could give a balm that would heal the wounds of the sin-scarred soul. What has manifested itself as above nature, physical, animal, and intellectual, and above free will, becomes essential nature in the beginning of the kingdom of God on earth.

CHAPTER XI

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

THE resurrection of Jesus Christ should not be taken as a type of the final resurrection of men in respect to its manner or its purpose. We do not know nor can we conceive of any necessity growing out of his own perfection, why the Son of God, who was from the beginning and by whom the worlds were made, should return to the body laid away in the tomb. We may conceive that the created human soul, by virtue of the laws of its being, is so related to a former organization that soul and body are essential to each other; that for the completion and perfection and continuance of finite personal identity of the individual, whose beginning depends on the union of soul and body, a resurrection of the body after death may be a necessity. How it is in fact we cannot tell. But there seems no reason why the Son of God should take human form again, so far as his dependence on a body is concerned. For instance, we cannot conceive of limitations of the Eternal and Omnipresent One by conditions of time and space, although he might be self-limited in his manifestations to finite creatures, but conditions conceived of only in terms of time space are the alphabet of all human knowledge. When we use such words as "decrees" and "foreknowledge," we are using the language of finite men, not the language of the

Eternal. It may be that in the case of mankind continued existence, or immortality, implies the necessity of resurrection of the body or some equivalent; perhaps some kind of metempsychosis. The subject is open only for conjecture, not for judgment. We may say that some one of these suggestions has seemed to be reasonable to one or another of the profoundest thinkers of the human race. But none of the reasons for the resurrection of mankind seem to belong to the Eternal Son, and it is of his resurrection that we are now concerned.

As we cannot discuss the necessity of Christ's resurrection on the grounds of his divine nature, because we cannot conceive of any such necessity, neither will it be necessary to discuss at this point its relation to the faith of his people in him; because this feature is well understood, and it has been elaborated with clearness and copiousness in many exhaustive arguments. The necessity seems essentially to lie in the fact that he is the Son of Man. For the sake of his people he accepted human birth. He shrinks from nothing which this human birth implies. He accepts and maintains his relationship to earth as of woman born. The time may come when the earth itself will pass away and this order of relationship cease, but it is not yet. So long as his body lies in the tomb there is nothing left of earth on which the hope of immortality for man can feed.

We think of God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the angels as purely spirit, with spiritual activities. But it is difficult to form any practical conception of a man without physical embodiment. When So-

ocrates was about to drink the fatal hemlock, Crito asked him, "How would you have us bury you?" Socrates replied, "In any way you like; only you must get hold of me and take care that I do not walk away from you," then he continues with a discouraging complaint that after all his teaching and arguments his disciples were not able to think of him except as they thought of his body. Without going into any useless speculation as to the mode of existence of disembodied spirits it may at least be proper to seek to form some practical conception of the relations of the soul to the body as we know them. It is said in Genesis that the body was formed of the dust of the ground, and God breathed into it the breath of life, and man became a living soul. From this brief description we may form the practical conception of a physical form adapted to a variety of physical exercises and a soul capable of using the body for all the purposes for which it was designed. We are not concerned here with any question as to what the soul may do or be out of the body, but only of the soul and body in their relation to each other. To make the resurrection of Jesus accord with nature it seems only necessary that his body should possess the physical power and adaptation of a body as a man, and that the soul should come and take control of this body as the ordinary living person moves and has his being.

It is the purpose of this paper to bring into view the circumstances of the resurrection of Jesus in such a form as to call attention to the natural side of the series of events. If the body is ready to ful-

fill its mission, the question is not, "Can it rise again," but, "Will the spirit and the body come together again."

You look upon a body from which the spirit has almost or wholly gone, and you ask the question, "Will the body come back to life again?" You sit in the evening and watch the waning flame as the candle burns down into the socket of the candlestick. Dimmer and dimmer the light becomes. At length you see the flame leap a little from the wick, and you think it is gone. But the heat of the candlestick generates a little more gas which rises and catches the flame before it has passed beyond its reach, and the flame comes down to the wick again. The candle truly reached out after the flame and brought the flame back to itself. As you watch a dying man sometimes the spirit seems to flicker over the body, like a waning flame, before the final separation, and you may ask if the body will come back to life again. But when the flame has wholly died away, the question is, "Will a flame be brought back to the candle?" So when the spirit has finally left the body, the question is not, "Will the body come back to life?" but, "Will life come back to the body?" If it should come back, would it find the support and readiness for service it must have to maintain the relationship once owned by both?

Let us now examine some of the conditions of life-activity, and see where the great difficulty lies in accepting the resurrection of Christ. The spirit seems to cease its control of the bodily functions when the physical organization becomes too weak

in some of its parts to respond to the impulse of life; or the circulation becomes clogged by the accumulation of matter which there is not strength to remove. It does not seem that the spirit loses its force, but that the body fails. Often mental vigor remains at its height till the very close of life. It is beyond dispute that there are cases of resuscitation of the drowned, when life has lost its power over the action of the body so completely that it could never of itself recover it, and yet the power may again have effect, and the natural functions of the soul may be restored, by the use of mechanical means. The manipulation of the heart and the lungs and chest by physical means cannot be made to take the place of the soul, for if this has fully departed the body will surely go to decay. But mechanical means may be used to stimulate conditions in the body which will arouse to life a vitality so feeble that it does not reveal itself, and never would reveal itself to the senses again were not these conditions restored by physical means. The case of drowning men being thus restored to vigor in a brief time, though not very common, is striking, but it does not differ essentially from the most familiar experiences of life. The use of restoratives and medicine in general is based on the same principle. The patient will surely die. He cannot withstand the ravages of disease. But a fitting use of medicines and care of the body will restore conditions of the body which will give the spirit a vantage ground from which it can claim its own again.

The writer had an experience some years ago

strikingly to impress the fact upon him that flickering life may be kept for an indefinite time, although in weak contact with the body, by such physical means, when all power of restoration seems to have been beyond reach. He called on a friend one evening whose only son, a lad of eight years of age, was very low with diphtheria, not then generally thought to be contagious. He remained till late, and when about to take his leave the physician said it was so serious a case that he wished him to stay and watch with the lad during the night. As the family joined in the request it was gladly granted. The night passed with no special change, and the next day he taught his usual college classes and prepared his work for the day following. In the evening he came again to inquire after the sick one and was told that council had been held and little hope of recovery was given. The family and physician united in the opinion that the watcher of the night before had a stronger hold on the life of the child than any one else, and they urged him to remain, if possible, and watch another night. They said that some one else could do his work the next day, and he could take it for rest. The physician said he would stay there all night to be ready for any emergency at a moment's notice, gave final directions, and about eleven o'clock all retired for the night. The watcher took his place on the floor beside the little bed, resting on his knees, and took the little wrist in his hand where he held it all night. It took but a moment to get the feeble pulse and catch its beat, and mark its frequency and strength. When the

pulse showed the least sign of weakness he gave some stimulating drops, as ordered by the physician, and strength immediately returned. Again after fifteen or twenty minutes signs of failure reappeared, and the stimulus was repeated. This condition continued with frequent failing and restoration of the pulse all night, and not once did the strength fail to return at the time the prepared drops were given. Thus he knelt and watched the ebb and flow of life as the flame leaped and fluttered, almost went out, and then rekindled the smoldering wick. At seven o'clock the physician came in and examined the patient, and said he could at least say that the child had not lost any during the night. He would take charge of him for a time himself, and let the watcher go to his breakfast and take some exercise in the open air. This I did, and returned at eight o'clock to see the child caught up and breathing his last in his father's arms. That watcher has never had a doubt that the child's life was at his finger tips during all those watchful hours, and that its power to reveal itself waxed and waned under the effects of the medicine given. There is but too much evidence that the body is sometimes laid in the grave after life has ceased to reveal itself for days, and yet the effect of the soil or some other cause has restored the physical conditions necessary to give the body back again to the dominion of life.

There is another fact that may be worth considering here. What do we mean when we say a man has struggled bravely for his life? It is that he has kept up hope and courage, and that his very

desire to live has prolonged his life. Can we not imagine that the physical condition is often such that life would be prolonged if one cherished this desire to live. When the spirit of Jesus Christ returned to its body in the tomb, the body did not come back to life but life came back to the body, and it needed only a preparation of the body to receive it and the old power of control would be restored. In how many ways this preparation might be made we do not know; we cannot affirm anything as even probable. But even here something of deep interest may be said, based on a circumstance emphasized by the Psalmist and by both Mark and John, though passed over by commentators as of no significance except as showing the fulfillment of prophecy. A bone of him shall not be broken.

It is claimed that the best medical review of the history of the crucifixion has led to the conviction that the physical cause of the death of Christ was a broken heart. But the whole church has been most profoundly convinced from the beginning that his life did not end in disappointment and despondency, but in a most triumphant death. A broken heart in his case can mean only this, that he knew his mission had been completely fulfilled, and there was no further reason why he should wish to prolong his life. Let us now call to mind that when the scriptures had been finally fulfilled he said, "It is finished; Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," and breathed out his life. And when the soldiers came to break his legs and hasten death, they unexpectedly found him dead, astonishing to

all, insomuch that Pilate called the centurion to confirm the report, and greatly wondered. One cannot read this story without the feeling that, humanly speaking, if Jesus had desired it he might have continued life, as other crucified ones are said to have done, for days, perhaps. He had been apparently in perfect health, and he was in the full vigor of manhood, and his physical condition seems to have been of the best. It seems almost necessary to suppose that his body was in a condition to retain life for a long time when the spirit went to the Father, and that there is profound meaning in the declaration of Jesus concerning his life, "I have power to lay it down." It is not a mere freak of the imagination to suppose that if this bodily condition was continued in any way till the third day, or restored at that time by any means such as may be easily supposed possible considering other cases, the spirit, when it returned, found a body ready for use and assumed its own proper functions in perfect harmony with the laws of bodily organization.

These suppositions are not made to suggest a claim that the resurrection has found its real or even its probable explanation, but it does show that there are ways in which the resurrection may have taken place, well within the domain of earthly laws, if it were the will of the spirit to take up again its bodily abode.

In view of these possibilities the fact of the resurrection, like the fact of the incarnation, is not a miracle at which we should stumble, but an event to challenge wonder that when the Son of God had condescended to take the form of man, and had

been ill-treated and rejected and crucified with superfluous marks of ignominy, he should be willing again to take up the dishonored and despised remains. But while he is at the head of a new order of beings, it is still the order of nature and in his treatment of nature he works in harmony with its laws, and he uses earth still as the support of his cause and the source of supplies for the people of his kingdom. It is the supernatural uniting with the natural and becoming a larger nature.

CHAPTER XII

THE VIEW OF NATURE WHICH PLACES JESUS AT THE CENTER OF THE FIELD MOST CONSISTENT

THERE has been no attempt in the preceding pages to obscure the fact that they have been written from the point of view of one who looks upon the history of this earth as the evolution of a plan rather than of a force. There are combinations of forces to realize a plan, and conditions must exist to develop a force, but it is difficult to understand how either a force or an atom can evolve in any other sense than that it manifests itself. An absolute monism of force or of matter would seem to forbid evolution. But a plan of necessity unfolds itself. Unless there is variety the only change we can conceive is in quantity, not in kind. If variety comes out in results there must be variety in the cause. If we think of the cause as one, but as combining all causes in harmony, with the power of self-limitation at will, there is nothing beyond for which to seek. Every judgment resolves itself at last into an analytical judgment, and every question that can be asked as to cause and effect is fully answered by the analysis of the one cause. Take, for instance, the child's question, "Who made God?" The answer is not so difficult as it has generally seemed, though the child might puzzle over it before it became perfectly clear. But it seems a simple and perfectly clear and logical answer to say that God is a con-

tinuous being without change, the God the child asks about, that is the God of today's thought, is the result of the God of yesterday without change, and the God of yesterday was the result of the God of the day before without change, and so on without limit. The answer introduces into the idea of God a time element, to accommodate the finite understanding, but this does not vitiate the answer so far as this question is concerned; in fact it is implied in the question itself. If we were asking about his omniscience we might need to eliminate the time element, but it does not seem necessary in answering the child and it is not possible to do it if we would speak of his understanding. We may ask if there is such a first cause, but if we accept an answer in the affirmative—and it is so necessary to do this that there are very few people of any age of the world who have doubted it—we have reached a definite and positive limit for all questions of causation.

If, however, we stop with separate causes working together, as Davidson does even in postulating substantial feelings and desires, the mind demands a unity of causation beyond them. So far as satisfying the mind is concerned we might as well stop at any other link in the chain of causation as at Davidson's double link that hangs upon nothing, while it is supposed to support the universe. But the mind can no more be satisfied to stop short of an adequate first cause than the scientific explorer can look upon fossils embedded in rock on the top of a mountain without asking what conditions must have existed

to make such a result possible.

If we go back to a first cause, such as above described, we can adequately account for all results that are not contradictory one to another. If now we will eliminate the element of time from our first cause, as Plutarch does in a passage of *De Sera Numinis Vindicta*, we shall find in him the efficient cause of later events the same as of the earlier; for he is the real cause, and we would see much of our discussion resolving itself into a dispute about the human use of words to describe divine events in terms whose meanings have been simply established by human conventionality. With this conception of God it is as easy to think of him as revealing himself and manifesting his power successively in time to meet the necessities of finite beings, as to suppose a set of forces established and left to develop themselves.

When we stop and think of it rationally, it seems one of the strangest things that have ever appeared in the development of belief, that any one should claim, or care to claim, that God does not concern himself with his creation, or that at any rate he does not manifest a care for it. An earthly prince or potentate, even in visiting a foreign land, leaves some token with both high and low to mark his visit as having been made. But, speaking in terms of human conception, the Ruler of the universe is an absentee ruler who either has not visited this part of his kingdom in all the eons since creation, or coming, has done nothing and left nothing to mark his coming. If some one claims that he has been here and worked

in ways that may be pointed out, the facts are denied. If some one reads a providence in directing the affairs of men, it is credited to chance. If some one testifies to the influence of the Holy Spirit within his soul, it is called an illusion. If there is a Creator it cannot be denied that he might have been working till today, but it may be fittingly asked, "By what means could He reveal his presence and his will?" We have piped unto you and ye have not danced. We have mourned unto you and ye have not lamented, say his witnesses. The Creator has bound together all the agents at work in his kingdom with a chain of cause and effect, and securely locked every link, and thrown away the key. Such is the logic of those who will not recognize the hand of God in nature.

The effort has been made in these pages to show the weakness of the attempt to banish the Creator from his universe, the Ruler from his kingdom, the Judge from his court, and to show the consistency of the supernatural events claimed with the order of nature. In the first place it was shown that the supernatural birth and resurrection of Christ, which for us are the crucial miracles of revelation, belong to a category of facts or claims which it is now impossible to disprove. It was next shown that Hume's argument from uniformity of experience, which is the root of all merely physical as well as metaphysical arguments against the supernatural, has no force outside of a purely materialistic conception of thought and consciousness, and that this destroys the chain of cause and effect; for to the senses every link is a

separate link, and the hidden links between any two which we see may be of any number and of any kind.

To make a parade of law, which is purely ideal, and bring it into this argument, admits into it a fact, indeed—for the idea is a fact—but it is a fact which with reference to physical nature is itself supernatural, and with a free will may easily interfere with any expectations based on uniformity of experience at any time. We may add to this fact of an ideal world, or a nature of ideas, the fact that there are few cases where experience is more uniform than this, that the ideal element in man, although dependent on the body for development, anticipates a higher realm of activity, and seems quite as much allied to a spiritual as to a physical existence. Its natural goal seems to be a spiritual life above all that is commonly known as nature.

In the third place it was shown that the claim that our living under a reign of law places us beyond reasonable expectation of any interference of the law-giver, is utterly futile, because there are realms of law in nature rather than a realm, and these realms so overlap that we continually find lower laws giving way to higher ones. At the most a law is but the human interpretation of the Creator's will, and there is no reason why we should not admit him to his own to reveal himself to us in higher terms in those matters in which his revelation has not been made clear by the laws of the lower realm.

In the fourth place it was shown that Christian consciousness in respect to the forgiveness of sins, the duties of life and the hope of immortality, depend on

our belief with respect to the birth and resurrection of Christ.

In the fifth place it was shown that the Creator has revealed himself successively in the larger nature that includes the highest development of man. There is evidence of great breaks in the serial development of nature, sometimes by vast accumulations of power, as in volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, and sometimes by the introduction of a power that seems creative. There is, of course, no possibility of arranging all events in a single series; and when we try to arrange them in many series that will lead back to a common beginning, we must find a cause adequate to all the results. In the human conception of time and succession, as we trace back for its beginning any series, like the series of facts that make up the vegetable kingdom, we might stop at any point of the inquiry, and say that the series began there with its maker. In a true sense we should be true to the facts because we must consider every series of events as continually dependent on the first great Cause who knows no limitation of time or succession in himself. The question we should strive to answer is whether, in view of our human conception of time and causation we have traced our series of events through second causes back as far as facts will warrant. When we have reached the limit of possible, or practicable inquiry, there is no reason why we should not say of the result, "It is the work of God, accomplished by the direct exercise of creative power, by the use of other supernatural means, or by some means beyond our knowledge which we would call natural if we knew

what it was." When we consider the whole universe there is no good reason why we should not be equally ready to accept any one of the alternatives that seemed most probable. One circumstance alone should prepare us for the first alternative, if it seemed most reasonable, and that is that we see a world of ideas exhibited everywhere around us, in plans which we can but trace to a creator, unless we are prepared to throw everything into the urn and leave it all to chance. There seems to be no more objection to supposing that a force capable of developing into a tree was created, so to speak, in the beginning, and allowed to slumber till the earth was fitted for it, than that when preparations were fully made the germs of vegetable life were then brought into existence in earthly forms. It is a question of fact, or rather in different senses both suppositions are true. The power existed in the beginning, and the germ existed in the idea of the Creator, and the thing itself did not exist in time till the earth was ready for it, and it appeared. But the coming of Christ to earth precludes the idea of a slumbering power for him and presupposes a previous real existence. And there seems a naturalness also in the supposition that other beginnings in the order of time be assigned to a power directly manifesting itself from above.

In the sixth place there have been changes on the earth that seem to scientific thought to make it reasonable to separate the classes of existence into kingdoms. There has undoubtedly been an evolution of plan or power, and the evolution has been one of progress upward. The laws of the different king-

doms are partly the same and partly peculiar to the different realms. The most universal of the laws we have been able to trace, or the one with the greatest diversity of application, is the fitness of earth through various evolutions to nourish and sustain all the orders of being that have been successively cast upon her bosom. Each successive stage of development, even to the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ, has recognized the laws of preceding nature, using the stored up powers for higher ends than earth had known before.

In general it is natural to trace creation back to a time when we may suppose nature in its lowest form began to be. We cannot think of it as eternal, and it is difficult to believe that with its progressiveness and limitations it was without beginning. In the place of nature there was nothing. In a sense we may say all else, all that was was supernatural. It was above the first nature that appeared. To avoid saying that nature was made out of nothing or that it was made out of the Creator himself, let us say it was the supernatural becoming nature.

By this supernatural we mean something that was not God but which depended on him. Perhaps we might think of the Creator's thought,—we cannot tell what it was, but it helps in thinking to make a definite representation even if but a supposition,—I say we might think of the Creator's thought, idea or plan as limited in time and place, and as assuming certain aspects which we call forces of nature, so that literally, the heavens were of old by the word of God, the essential expression of his thought. When

God said *Light be*, he had seen the darkness that brooded over all the nature that then was, and his thought took the form of trembling ether; which bears to the boundaries of space and makes manifest the minutest pulsations of matter, and this is light. However we may think of it, if we think of nature as beginning to be, it is most consistent to say it is the supernatural becoming what we call nature. And thus far in our development it is most reasonable to think of two stages, the second added to the first. There was first the creation of the coarser matter, and then of light. How many more origins there may have been we cannot tell, but it is difficult to see how we can avoid assuming a supernatural origin, as has been suggested before, for vegetable life, for animal life, and for man. That there should be many similarities in the development and manifestation of these different forms we might expect, because in each case there is a higher power using the lower forms according to the laws of the realm into which it has come. In each case what has before been recognized as nature is extended to include something new that appears to have come from a higher source. The coming of a spiritual life into this nature to make it worth while for creation to be is in complete harmony with the whole order of progressive nature, and the coming of the Son of God crowns the work as supreme.

The effort has been to show how evolution has been a struggle to reach a higher plain, and when the struggle seemed to have reached its limit, this limit was but a preparation for a higher power to take pos-

session and carry on the process through another and a higher stage, until a spiritual life and a good hope of immortality have been attained. It has not been simply a struggle to maintain a footing gained, but a struggle to reach a higher plane. We have been mounting the ladder on which we climb by reaching to the rungs above us.

A recent writer, speaking of the Greek tragedians says, "It was a merit, surely, that they were not content—even as a Shakespeare was so well content to do—to depict human life or society without its due setting in the cosmos."

God—Heaven—Earth. This is the triple theme of the epic of time, and it will continue to be the theme till time shall be no longer. Let us put it on canvas, if we can, and hold it before our eyes for contemplation. God, unseen, but spreading a soft radiance everywhere, like morning glow before the sun is up; His attributes revealed in creation, the Heaven and the Earth; His infinite power shown in giving being and orderly motions to the elements of matter and to the bodies in the firmament; His infinite knowledge shown in guarding from the smallest loss every element of force and every atom of created matter; His infinite wisdom shown in the combinations and control of the elements set to do his will; His majesty displayed in the stately progress of His works—He spoke and they became, He commanded and they stood fast in place and in all their courses, and angels and archangels waited upon His word; His holiness revealed in the creation and government of moral beings; His justice, goodness,

truth and other attributes voiced by voiceless worlds in all the realms of space; His love crowning His crowning gift to man. This is the back-ground.—In the foreground stands the Earth. It is at the focus of all the divine rays that shine in the attributes of Jehovah. It is the center of all interest. All else is known only as it bears upon the destiny of Earth, the Earth only as it answers back to Heaven. Its history, directly or by implication, is the sum and substance of all that is revealed of the Creator's plan and purpose.—At first a nebulous mass of particles flying hither and thither, as if trying to find themselves and failing in the attempt, a chaos.—The scene changes. The Earth a fiery ball hurtling through space as if in a race against time.—Again, the Earth of land and water. Wind, storm and clouds, volcanoes, earthquakes and great commotions on sea and shore. It may be wonderful, but what is there in all this to make the Earth attractive, worthy to be the very center of a glorious picture. Nothing but the display of almighty power, rather to be dreaded than sought after.—The scene shifts again. The Earth still occupies the center of the foreground. A tree rises from its surface, buds and puts forth leaves, flowers, fruit and seed; dies and goes back to Earth. The Earth is a forest of trees and shrubs, a garden of flowers and fruits, delicately formed and answering back somewhat to the wisdom of the Creator; but good, for what in the great universe of which they are the most attractive feature of the central figure? They fall to the ground, crumble and return to dust.—Again, the beast of the

field walks on the Earth, answering to a higher wisdom and knowledge. But the higher attributes of the Creator, His justice, holiness and love, find no answering look of recognition.—Behold again. Man appears. God's holiness and love revealed at last! But by what a contrast! What a travesty of truth and justice! Why should the Earth be allowed longer to hold the focal point of interest and influence at the center of creation? The violence of Earth cannot be said to rise even to the pitch of the tragic in the force of its hate and the fury of its fierce endeavor, except as a foil to give a hint of what might have been. Otherwise it is simply a display of impotence and folly. There is surely nothing here worthy of Earth's proud position on the canvas.—But look again. There comes the Son of God in the form of man, and takes a place on this same Earth and in the very center of the picture. He came to redeem the world to himself, and bring life and immortality to light. Hear the angels singing at his birth. Even the guilty race have closed the doors of Janus.

“No war, or battle's sound
Was heard the world around.”

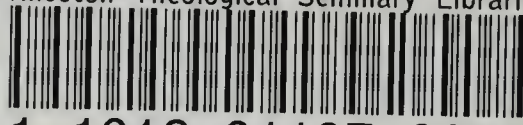
Watch the conflict and see him baffle Satan in the wilderness.—Hear his gracious and all-penetrating voice from the slope above the sea. How David, Paul and John and others use the terms of emulation, of physical conflict, and of dread war, to emphasize and make clear their conception of the Chris-

tian's "race," "prize," "fightings," "warfare," "victory." But not one syllable of all this comes from his lips, even in figure of speech, as he speaks to the world from the mountain and from the plain, from Judah's fertile fields and from the northern lake, from the wayside well and from the synagogue and temple, from Galilean hills and Calvary's sacred mount. Man, and yet how different from man! His glance penetrates to the heart of things, and he needs no help from rhetoric to express the fulness of the truth. His kingdom is not of this world and his servants do not fight.—Behold him transfigured on the holy mount.—His mercy, grace and authority do not fall below his wisdom. See the displays of his power in the control of nature. In his presence the blind see, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised.—He dies, obedient to law, but under a higher law he bursts the bands of death, rises from the tomb and ascends up on high as advocate for his redeemed ones still on Earth, and others yet to be. Does it not now seem worth while to give to Earth that has endured the throes of all the myriads of years that have passed seconding the evolution of the great plan of the Creator, the exalted place to which she was destined in the beginning, when God created the Heaven and the Earth. But this can only be looked upon as commensurate with the position earth and man sustain in the physical universe and in greatness of intellect, if Jesus Christ was divinely born and divinely raised from the dead; if he be really the Son of God. Otherwise we must turn from this contemplation of the earth and make a different

picture. Earth must be relegated to some dark corner in the labyrinth of unexplored and perplexed paths of a boundless and indefinable nature the purpose and end of which evade our dreams.

The question we ask in closing is not which picture is most pleasing to contemplate, but which most exactly represents the nature that we know, and which sounds the deepest note of harmony.

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